THE SYMBOLS OF CULTURAL SURVIVAL . . . By A. G. Keller

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THE Saturday Review OF LITERATURE

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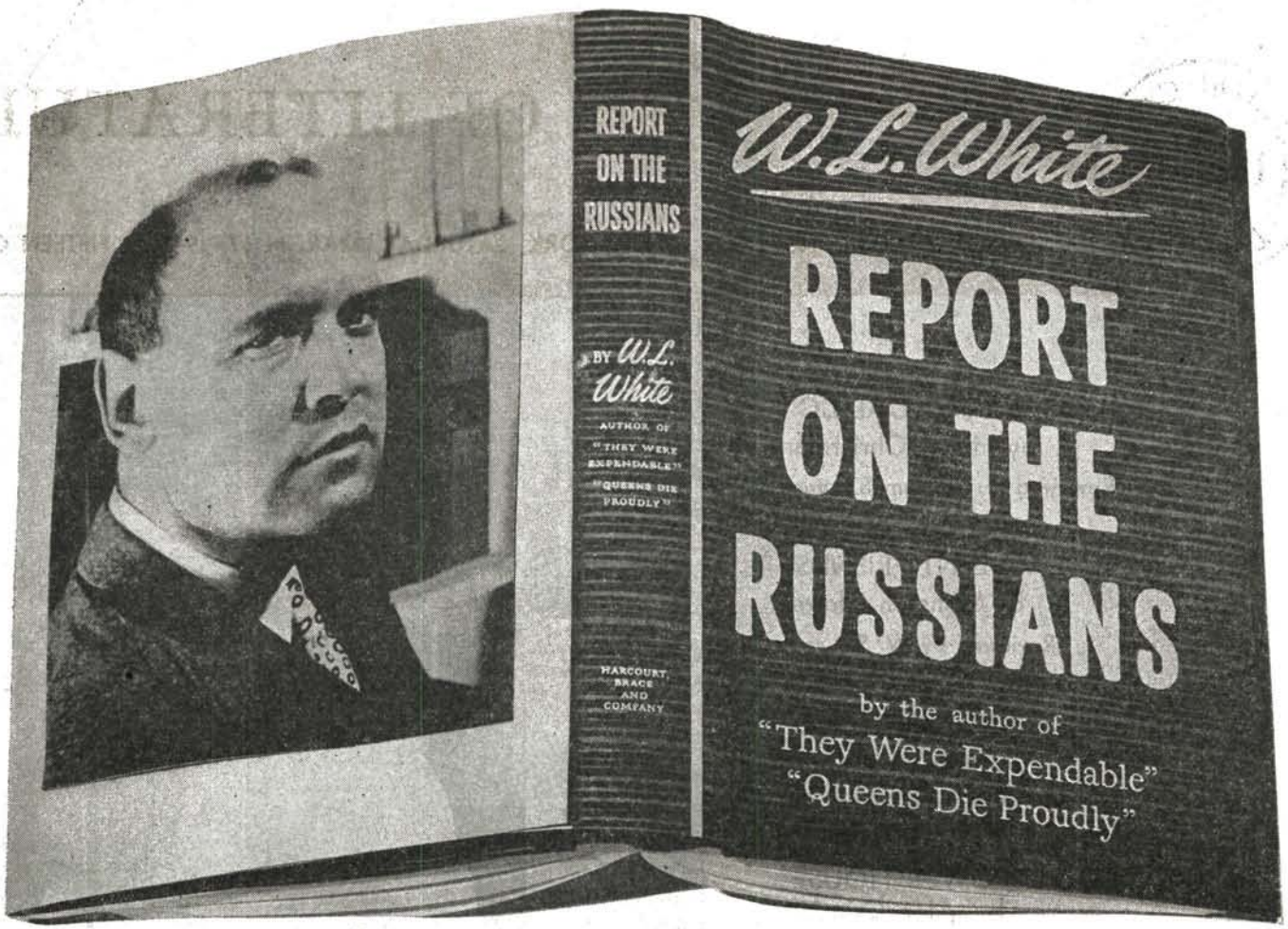

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This Week

March 17, 1945

Article

PAGE

THE SYMBOLS OF CULTURAL SURVIVAL
By A. G. Keller 5

Reviews

TIN HORNS AND CALICO
By Henry Christman
Reviewed by William S. Lynch 8

THE VIOLENT FRIENDS
By Winston Clewes
Reviewed by W. S. Lands 9

LOOKING FOR A BLUEBIRD
By Joseph Wechsberg
Reviewed by Robert Pick 10

THE POWER HOUSE
By Alex Comfort
Reviewed by John Farrar 11

EDWARD BELLAMY
By Arthur E. Morgan
Reviewed by Robert E. Spiller 12

WHAT TO DO WITH JAPAN
By Wilfrid Fleisher
Reviewed by T. A. Bisson 21

COPERNICUS AND HIS WORLD
By Herman Kesten
Reviewed by Waldemar Kaempffert 26

THE BATTLE WITHIN
By Philip Gibbs
Reviewed by Katharine Simonds 27

ANTOLOGIA DE LA LITERATURA MEXICANA
Edited by Carlos Castillo
Reviewed by Dudley Fitts 31

Departments

YOUR LITERARY I.Q. 12

STRICTLY PERSONAL
By Carlos Baker 13

EDITORIAL 14

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 15

TRADE WINDS
By Bennett Cerf 22

SEEING THINGS
By John Mason Brown 24

LITERARY CRYPT: No. 91 29

THE PHOENIX NEST
By William Rose Benét 32

THE CRIMINAL RECORD 32

DOUBLE-CROSTICS: No. 573 35

DOUBLE-CROSTICS CLUB 35

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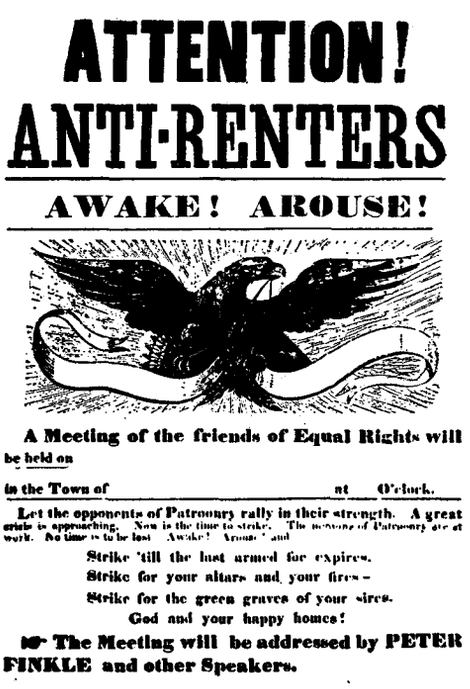

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BEHIND the faded broadside reproduced here lies a great story . . . one of the most picturesque and dramatic of America's untold tales, a story of the triumph of the democratic spirit over the unjustified pretensions of aristocracy. It is astonishing to reflect that American history, even that which is recent enough to be known and accessible, is filled with dark, unexplored crannies. This week we are publishing a book which is the result of a fifteen-year investigation of one of these forgotten niches. The title is TIN HORNS AND CALICO, and in it Henry Christman relates in stirring, lively detail the complete account of the revolt of New York's tenant farmers in the 1840's, the uprising which has become known as the Tin Horn Rebellion, and which was stirred to action by such posters as that shown above.

Most Americans have forgotten that feudal landlordism was the American way in New York State only a hundred years ago. The rule of the great patroons in the Hudson Valley was not disturbed by the winning of the Revolution. Patriots who returned from defeating the British were fair game for the great landowners, like Stephen Van Rensselaer, who wished to "settle" thousands of their baronial acres, and therefore offered to veterans farms "without cost until they become productive." Hundreds upon hundreds of farmers succumbed to the bait, and seven years later they were handed a lease of "incomplete sale", devised by that aristocrat and exponent of the landed-gentry theory of government, Alexander Hamilton. Tenants and their heirs were to pay all taxes, use the land for agriculture only, annually pay 10 to 14 bushels of wheat and four fat fowls, and give one day's service with team and wagon. The landlord retained wood, mineral, and water rights, and the tenant and his heirs could never sell the property. Such leases were widespread through half a dozen counties, and generations of Americans proceeded to live in semi-serfdom.

Richest of all the patroons was Stephen Van Rensselaer whose reign had netted him 41 million dollars and who feared the outbreak of opposition among the farmers. He let rents slide in bad years, and he never brought a tenant to court. In 1839 when this "Good Patroon" died, his sons, not so crafty, began to press for back rents. It was the signal for organized resistance.

A sheriff would ride into the hills armed with writs to evict tenants. A farmer would spy him, blow a warning blast on his dinner horn. Soon the hills would reverberate with answering horns, and in a matter of minutes the farmers for miles around would know the sheriff was coming. From hiding places weird ragged disguises would be snatched and donned, and at a strategic turn in the road the sheriff would find himself quietly blocked by a band of "Indians" dressed very much like the Patriots at the Boston Tea Party. Many times, without daring to provoke a clash, the sheriff would have to retreat.

Incidents like these multiplied, and a growing army of farmers and their sympathizers flocked to the cause. In the end, though it took years of suffering and terror, they won by the ballot, not by force. It was one of the most decisive triumphs of democratic action in our history.

The first blast of that dinner horn kept on resounding over the miles of the expanding country and over the years of national growth. The Anti-Rent Rebellion led directly to the passage of the federal Homestead Act of 1862 which opened the free lands of the West to a free people. Two of the tenant leaders led the bolt of the abolitionist and free soilers from the Whig and Democratic parties and founded the then radical Republican Party; one of the leaders gave the party its name.

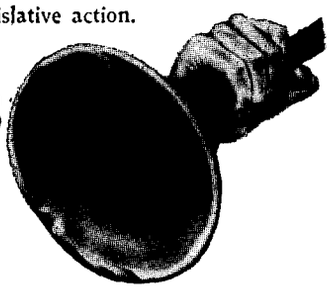
And what of the Rebellion itself, and the people who did the fighting and dying? Henry Christman grew up in Schenectady County where the family farm had generations ago been leaseheld by one of the patroons. All during his boyhood he heard random handed-down stories about half-remembered people and events which had never been in the history books, and he heard the old ballads sung. When he got out of Alfred University fifteen years ago and went to work on an Albany newspaper, he was already deep in the search for the facts. Old county histories were no help; compiled in the shadow of the rich and privileged they contained practically no details of the rebellion. From that time on he kept reading the files of old newspapers, many found in attics of Anti-Renters' descendants. He interviewed the descendants, he searched court records, he went through

Anti-Rent cartoon

the million motions which true and passionate scholarship demands of an untiring seeker. He then set down the events, in day-to-day fashion, of exactly what happened. TIN HORNS AND CALICO reads, therefore, as vividly as a first-hand report, and it re-creates a whole set of heroic fighters for freedom who can never again be forgotten.

The book has many morals. As you read it, you are impressed with the richness of the American past and the aptness of its lessons. This is one of those books which are always needed, not only for the future but for the present. We cannot be reminded too often that our democracy, so bravely fashioned, demands periods of vigilance and upheaval, and constant awareness of the people's all-powerful weapons—the ballot box and legislative action.

Tin Horns & Calico



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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Symbols of Cultural Survival

A Shifting Utility or Relevance of Obsolete Forms

A. G. KELLER

A SURVIVAL is something that has outlived its relevance: it was expedient and of use once, is so no longer, but still persists. The appendix and the wisdom-tooth are examples of the organic survival. A cultural survival is any item of culture —tool, process, practice, idea, system —that has outlived its original or former sense and usefulness, when it was a good adjustment. The organic survival, or vestigial organ, on its way out, is generally degenerate and sickly; and the cultural variety may, as constituting a maladjustment, turn into a social menace.

A preliminary alignment of these two types is profitable for the understanding of the cultural survival, which is the topic before us. The appendix remains what it is; it cannot be transmuted into something else that is useful and not likely, having become ailing, to be dangerous. So long as it offers no threat, it can be ignored; otherwise its elimination, as a whole, is called for: it must disappear by its removal from, or along with, the body it inhabits.

By contrast, the cultural survival can be manipulated, by adaptation or "interpretation," so that it has, or seems to have, a present relevance and utility quite other than those possessed by its original, now obsolete, form. Sabbaths were originally fetish-days, religious holy days. As such, and for ages, the sabbath lasted on, all over the world. It still survives, in the practice of even the unreligious, but as a rest-day, an economic holiday. That shift of connotation restores to it, not its former sense, but another kind of signification, or intelligibility, or practical utility. Here is a species of transmutation normal within the social range as contrasted with the organic.

Survivals continuing in their original sense are generally less than useless. They are superfluous and uneconomical; at worst, they are drags on advance. They hang back, and may amount to maladjustments that persist in patent or inner contradiction with the codes of a later time. That is why society rids itself of them by various methods of elimination, direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious—generally the latter, for selection operates among the mores in a typically unpremeditated and automatic manner.

A familiar survival is the use of Latin in religious services. It actually serves to promote the element of mystery and solemnity in ceremonial; for any ceremony is impressive and dignified in proportion to the number of old, time-honored, survivalistic features in it. Nevertheless, the survivalistic idea has often enough in history been an *ignis fatuus,* luring men into ambiguous ways: for instance, the conception of star-control over human destiny. It is noteworthy that the persistence of cultural survivals is promoted by wishful thinking and by deference to the Authority of some Great Man; and that the survival cannot stand up against free investigation on scientific lines of the records of human experience. The geographer could find no Fountain of Youth; the anatomist no "resurrection-bone."

A classic example of past utility, in the original sense, together with present relevance in another sense, will serve to indicate the indirection of the selective process. The button-hole in the lapel of a coat is still useful to retain a flower or a badge; but that was not its original function. It used to correspond to an actual button, now absent, by which the collar, having been turned up, could be drawn close about the throat. Upon coat-cuffs there are often ornamental buttons, and sometimes button-holes represented by stitching upon the unpierced cloth. The "interpretation" of the slit in the lapel or of the button on the cuff as a casual convenience or ornament rescues it in no manner from the survival-category; for its original or past utility is no more.

Such interpretation on the basis of present usage, called *Rationalization,* is one of the indirect methods of getting rid of a survival. It is common practice to rationalize survivals by guessing at their origin on the basis of later-developed ideas, that is, to read into them a rationale not original in them—that original sense being either unknown or repellent to later taste. This process witnesses to a lack of knowledge or of historic sense in the rationalizer, or to his predisposition to wishful thinking. He encounters the survival, reflects briefly upon its "logical" place in his own purview, and then accounts for its origin upon the basis of what "stands to reason" in his own mind. Why is pork forbidden to a Chosen People? Because an inspired Authority, Moses, knew that trichinosis comes from eating the flesh of swine. Merely a revelation about hygiene.

THIS very confidence in "logic" is another survival out of a time when men thought that truth could be arrived at by juggling words and concepts; that the human mind is endowed with innate powers which, by the employment of the proper processes of "reasoning," can reach truth by a direct, smooth, natural route, without laborious recourse to sordid fact-digging, levelling, bridging, and other "materialistic" exercises. Thus could even the existence and character of God be "proved." Such demonstration

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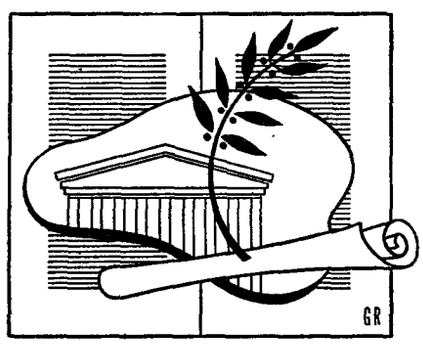
is a survival of the operations of metaphysical schoolmen; it has been shown up so often by the quarrels of rival philosophers, as well as by the tests of scientific verification, that no one pays much attention to it except to catch at it in default of a better stick to beat a cat—when there is "something to prove," a thesis to defend, a major premise from which to draw desirable deductions. The metaphysical logicians have knocked each other down, like a row of dominoes, by exploding, each to his own satisfaction, the other's major premises, or by so interpreting them as to deduce from them, by "faultless logic," diverse or even opposite conclusions. Deduction remains the common mode because it is less laborious, showier, and as irrefutable as it is unprovable; furthermore, it seems "natural" because all have been trained to it from the cradle. But it is as useless as a boy's popgun against a tank.

LOGIC is a good servant but a bad master. In the exposition of ideas already accepted, an artful orderliness is always effective. That kind of logic, as an adjustment to the mind's appreciation of orderliness, is never out of date. But formal logic—the syllogism —as a means for truth-discovery can never rise above the level of its original assumptions. You get out in the conclusion of the syllogism exactly what you have put into your major premise. If you insert a pound of pork into the meat-grinder, you do not get three pounds of nightingales' tongues out at the other end. In short, logic is expository only, not heuristic at all.

When the chance for simple rationalism is not immediately or presently "self-evident," recourse may be taken to a more imaginative and poetic version of the process, namely, *Symbolization.* To illustrate: the Greek word "psyche" means both "soul" and "butterfly." Then the butterfly has been elevated to be "the symbol of immortality" of the soul. A gilded butterfly sometimes adorns the portals of a cemetery. A clergyman once described the life-cycle of this insect, and concluded triumphantly: "And now will you deny immortality!" But beneath all this elaboration lies a plain survival. Study of the actual facts reveals that the butterfly was once actually identified with the soul; it was believed to be the form under which the soul appeared—not a symbol of the soul at all, but the soul itself. That former belief now survives, bereft of its original meaning, in a symbolization, representing what "we" can see in it from the standpoint of our own mental outfit.

Symbolization is a much easier explanation than mere rationalization. To symbolize, you do not have to know anything—about trichinosis, for instance—but simply to set your imagination loose to seize, as the human mind is prone to do, upon the analogy nearest at hand. Then a litle ingenuity, easy and pleasing to exercise on the basis of a "happy thought," *à la* Freud or Wundt, carries you, say, into the butterfly's well-known life-cycle, and behold! the job is done. Also eternal life is "proved."

There is one test-question that probes into the real, historical origin of the symbol: "Why this particular symbol (say, the Fish of the early Christians) rather than some other?" It is a good question and profitable, for an adequate answer leads to historical inquiry; and investigation of



the facts winds up with a knowledge of what was actually in the minds of the people who set afloat the thing now called a symbol. What they had in mind now turns out to be, in many a case, something long forgotten, and no longer tenable in the present. That is what reveals the symbol to be an hitherto unrecognized survival. In the case of symbols so reducible, evidently symbolization is no explanation at all, but only a fancy species of rationalization—no trouble, but also of no use, any more than the treacherous "argument from analogy."

The survival is no symbol at all. It is a former actuality, behind us, and not facing forward, as does the symbol. It is to be distinguished from the symbol, which faces forward, that is to say, has in it an element of prophecy. Dream-interpreters, from Joseph to Sigmund, have dealt copiously in such symbols. Imitative magic was always trying to influence the future by way of symbolization. A plump child is seated upon the knees of a bride in the expectation that she will thereby presently acquire a similar treasure of her own. A man disguised as a bison is chased and brought down, in the expectation that this rehearsal of a hoped-for performance will bring to pass the actual hunting-down of a real animal. This sort of symbolization may even be regarded as a prayer, acted out so as to preclude any misunderstanding; in any case, it looks toward the future, has, in itself, nothing to do with the past, but is merely an expresison of a contemporary idea.

There are sure to be practices that are compounds of both the survivalistic and the symbolic. The Russian groom once touched the bride with a whip presented to him by her father, whose ritual speech, as he handed it over, is evidence of the survivalistic nature of the act, just as the formula of acceptance by the groom prefigures the distribution of sex rights in the status of matrimony about to be entered. So the ceremony points both backwards and forwards. Says the father, as he strikes his daughter lightly with the whip: "By these blows, thou, O daughter, recognizest the authority of thy father. That authority now goes over into other hands. In my place thy husband will teach thee obedience." Replies the groom, sticking the whip in his girdle: "I do not expect to have need of it, but I take it and will keep it as a gift." The survivalistic "symbol" of authority, together wtih its transference, is thus rationalized into something else, with the understanding that the whip, being of no prospective use in its original function (which thus becomes survivalistic), still needs some rationale. But if actual whipping turns out to be needed, the rationalization announced in the ceremony is to be dropped, and the survival to be resurrected into actual use. Thus, as in every evolutionary series, man-made categories shift and blend through zones of transition.

Allied to the foregoing processes, which insulate survivals so as to render them immune to recognition and therefore subject to rationalization, is *Conventionalization.* It renders anything whatever "matter-of-course," so that it is not "noticed." It causes even the most sensitive-minded believer to overlook words or sentiments in religious ritual or in the text of Scripture which would be offensive in secular usage. When conventionalization wears thin and people begin to "notice," the need of expurgation arises. An illustration of the slackening of religious conventionalization is the omission, in the wedding ritual, of "It is better to marry than to burn," or, in the funeral service, of references to worms. When the insulation wears off, criticism appears; then comes some more rationalization, to insist that passages or acts do not mean what they say or portray—that they are merely "symbolic" of something more agreeable to present taste. References to blood-baptism or to militarism in hymns sung by the fastidious and the pacifistic are specific instances of a conventionalization that makes such practices as innocuous as the nudity of an artist's figures, or even of his posing model.

It is incomprehensible that serious students of society's evolution should

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deny or decry the evidence from survivals. The organic evolutionists, from Darwin on, have made much of vestigial structures, along with fossils, as links with the past; and if cultural survivals are not of equal significance with what Darwin calls "aborted organs," or with fossils, then a number of acute investigators—Tylor and Wilken, for instance—have committed themselves, quite out of character, to futility. But many a valuable has been dug out of a reputed junk-pile.

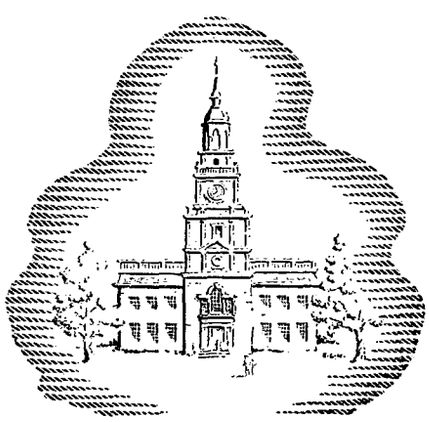
Survivals may afford a key to the past where there is as yet no other; and they have not been shown up when other and better keys have been discovered. They unlock the same doors to the same storehouse. We know from history that Latin was once a spoken and commonly understood tongue; but if we did not, anyone equipped with the survival-principle might readily and correctly infer that truth from the use of Latin in the Mass, just as he could infer from the employment of "thou" and "thee," in services conducted in English, that the second person singular was once current. If he knew also that religion is especially conservative by reason of holding that the archaic is holy as the new is profane, he would repose a still serener confidence in the evidence of survivals preserved in the cult, as reconstructive of the past.

Suppose that we were all in the status of a Martian visitor, dependent for our only evidence, in the absence of a historic record, upon survivals—and we are exactly in that position as respects certain matters where, as yet, there are no other keys—should we simply shut our eyes to that evidence because it is not as full and definite as historical documents or archeological finds? The evidence from survivals is sure to be incomplete and fragmentary; but so is that of geological fossils and of prehistoric finds; and yet they are hailed as boons to research. It is true that survivals are often not tangible, as are fossils or artifacts, and that enthusiastic indiscretion has discredited the study of them; but even historic records are not immaculate in their objectivity, and historians themselves have been at times more eager than discreet. To advocate the rejection of evidence because it has been used fantastically, or even because it is by nature ticklish to handle, is a counsel of despair rather than of hope—hope, however chastened and cautious, but with considerable realization to back it.

THERE is no proof of anything except by the citation of numerous instances, followed by the application to them of the inductive process. Any item in Frazer's "Golden Bough" collection, taken by itself, might be construed as exceptional or of small significance; but his accumulation of case upon case becomes eventually irresistible. It is the cumulative, net impression, as fact after fact beats upon its door, that at length opens the mind to new truth. In this brief exposition, I cannot aspire to vie with a Frazer, for a lifetime of attention to the topic does not lie behind me. I am limited to illustration of survival-types.

Types of survival might be distinguished upon the degree of survival-quality exhibited, that degree ranging from nearly zero towards one hundred per cent. There is, first, the virtually pure survival, wholly unrationalized, unsymbolized, unconventionalized. Then the various shadings away from purity through interpretation, to say nothing of plain forgetfulness, as in the case of throw-backs detectable solely in the etymology of the terms applied to them. For automatic selection may leave a survival recognizable only in the original meaning of terms now wholly altered in import: in "disaster" (ill-starredness), for example, an etymology harking back to astrology and beyond. Again, there may be a scarcely more recognizable hint in vestigial acts and practices that have lost their original significance long ago, as when an axeman spits on his hands or a fisher on his bait. The former would probably rationalize by saying that he is improving his grip; with the latter, any explanation could disclose only the fertility of his imagination.

There is another practice that throws light, as from a distance, upon various types of survival: the conscious employment as "local color," in several kinds of literature, of discarded ideas and practices. This serves at least as a reminder of various survivals. What is in any such manner derived from legend and folklore is really a kind of ethnography. The writer neither believes, practises, rationalizes, nor symbolizes his borrowings; he is simply on the trail of verisimilitude; nevertheless, what he uses would not be available, had it not been at one time an actuality of fact or belief. Cannibalism, ogres, transmigration, and many another bygone practice or notion are used over and over in prose and verse. Consider Homer's Cyclops. In "The Jungle Books" animals talk as they were once thought actually to do. Ideas and practices long defunct are resurrected into a "survivaloid" existence. From them, evoked if only as a literary device, a Martian could infer as to the past, as from out-and-out recorded survivals. Artists of pen, brush, or chisel, intent upon their own projects, have preserved a sort of record of such discards. In any case, it seems not irrelevant to mention them, without further attempt to fix their exact status in the survival-series.



THE classification of survivals is about as difficult as is that of grasses for an amateur without a botanical handbook; and there are no such dependable classifications covering social phenomena as science has produced in the inorganic and organic ranges. It would be possible to arrange survivals in an order of oddity; or according to the degree of the religious element in them; or on the criterion of the practical utility that has automatically evolved out of them. Any such classification might have its points. Preference, in the present case, centers upon their degree of *Recognizability*.

Full recognition of an idea or practice as a survival is so rare as hardly to count as a rubric; for it requires historical, scientific research. Without that, such a term as, for instance, the above-mentioned "disaster" could not be recognized as survivalistic; nor could other astrologic derivatives, such as "jovial," "mercurial," "saturnine." An inquiry that sets out to delve back through derivation-sequences toward original forms no longer recognized must aim at the promotion of recognition of the currently unrecognized.

That purpose suggests an alignment of survivals according to their degree of *Unrecognizability*, due chiefly to the interpretation of them by way of the aforesaid rationalization and symbolization, the handiest and easiest ways of accounting for what is strange because alien or forgotten. Real investigation, besides being always toilsome, offers no immediate and grandiose results, whereas a snatch at the explanation that "stands to reason," as well as facile "reasoning from analogy," are both not only easy but also exhilarating owing to the sense of spaciousness and swift insight that attends upon them.

In assessing degrees of unrecognizability of survivals, it is desirable to look into this matter of rationalization somewhat more closely; for it promotes unrecognizability. The mood of the rationalizer who encounters ideas or practices that do not lend them-

(*Continued on page* 28)

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The Anti-Rent Rebellion

TIN HORNS AND CALICO. A Decisive Episode in the Emergence of Democracy. By Henry Christman. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1945. 343 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by WILLIAM S. LYNCH

THE great crescendos of American history are of course those represented by the Revolution and the subsequent major wars of the last century and a half. But—to labor a metaphor—the score is incomplete and even incomprehensible without those contrapuntal episodes which do as much to carry the theme as the most crashingly familiar passages. Bacon's Rebellion, Shay's Rebellion, the Whiskey Rebellion, Dorr's Rebellion may be in minor key but they are important and integral parts of our country's history and more than proper material for study today.

It is from this group of desperate attempts to realize the meaning of America that Henry Christman has drawn his subject—the Anti-Rent Rebellion of the 1840's in New York State. He has wrested from the antiquarian one of the most fascinating of stories and has done justice to men whose struggles have been forgotten by most of us. If they are recalled at all, they are colored by the prejudices of the aristocratic James Fenimore Cooper. For Cooper, the creator of Leatherstocking and Natty Bumppo, gave us also Aaron Thousandacres, the squatter of "The Chainbearer," and the uncouth and demanding "Injuns" of the "Redskins," bucolics who in disguise would destroy their betters. For that matter, Walt Whitman, writing in the *Brooklyn Eagle,* showed himself strangely out of sympathy and out of character in his editorial attitudes toward the farmers of the Hudson counties. More recently readers have glimpsed these events in Anya Seton's "Dragonwyck."

There is no doubt of Mr. Christman's sympathy. The battles, legal and physical, between the feudal-minded landlords and the farmers who resented the endless rents and "quarter sales" imposed upon them, are clear cut in their moral issues. Never for a moment does he doubt that the Rensselaers, the Livingstons, and the others are arrogant barons, scheming against hardy yeomen in the best tradition of freemen.

It is startling to recall how recently the events described in this book took place. Only a century ago, even after the era of Jacksonian democracy, the "patroons" were collecting rents and services from the inhabitants of whole counties and were refusing to turn into freeholds the farms which generations had held as leaseholds. It is even more amazing to learn that some upstate farmers are today paying in cash the equivalent of old feudal tributes. But at best this is quaint, and at worst an example of the difficulty of completely extirpating ancient customs.

In the nature of things it was inevitable that the manor could not last in a region blessed with abundance of land and with few people living on the land. The patroon system, established by the Dutch in the seventeenth century, was an anachronism long before the American Revolution. It survived as long as it did largely through the accident that many of the landowners were patriots rather than Tories and through their domination of law and politics by influence and favor. The historical imperatives were against them long before the eighteen-thirties and forties. The strange thing about the Tin Horn Rebellion is not that it occurred but that it was so late in occurring. It needed what historians like to call an immediate incident to set off the basic and explosive accumulation of grievances beneath it.

In this case it was the death in 1839 of the "Good Patroon," Stephen Van Rensselaer III, whose heirs insisted upon rights which their father had had sense enough not to insist upon. Resistance by the tenants took the usual form of collective action, for the most part passive but violent when necessary. From the standpoint of interest and color to the general reader, the methods of resistance reflected in the title of this book are the most appealing. The tin horn customarily used to sound the call to meals became the tocsin to notify the neighbors of the arrival of sheriff and posse. The strident blast of such an instrument must have set the wild echoes flying with less music than the conventional bugle but surely with more scorn and taunting. The "calico" refers to the disguises which the Anti-Renters used when thwarting sales of land and preventing the serving of writs. Taking their cue from the Boston Tea Party, they dressed as Indians and called their leaders chiefs. Of these there were many whose adventures and trials make them the leading characters in this study. Men like Dr. Smith A. Boughton, the "Big Thunder" of the Indians, like Thomas A. Devyr, passionate Irish rebel and ex-Chartist, like Edward O'Connor, and a host of others fought desperately, were imprisoned and impoverished to put an end to manor aristocracy. The story of their efforts, of their final victory through ballots rather than bullets is told in great detail.

Henry Christman has a sense of folk and fresh country wind.

It is easy to agree with Carl Carmer, who in his introduction to Mr. Christman's volume declares that "this narrative will be the standard authoritive history of its subject for many years to come." Historical scholars searching for something to carp at may accuse the author of too great bias in what should be an objective and detached study. His landlords, sheriffs, and other up-renters are almost always callous and hard; his down-renters invariably noble and freedom-loving.

Mr. Christman might confess to a sentimental attachment to the men whose efforts ended medieval feudalism in America. He was born and reared among the descendants of these Anti-Renters and is steeped not only in the archival document but in the place and legend. Impressive as is the bibliography attached to the text, his list of acknowledgments is even more so. It is in that list that one gets the clue to the attractive ease with which he keeps us evermindful of the dirt roads, the ploughed fields, the crossroad taverns that are the setting of history and of the flesh and blood qualities of his characters. For Mr. Christman has wandered down these roads and actually talked in their farm-houses with the descendants of his people. He has caught in his scholarly work some of that quality which his friend Carl Carmer possesses in his—a sense of folk and of fresh country wind. The ballads and songs of the Anti-Rent movement appended to this text remind one of Mr. Carmer's taste for such. Combined with impressive scholarship, "Tin Horn and Calico" provides an eminently readable and authoritative study of an episode in American history that was far more reaching than the usual regional incident.

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Of Swift and Vanessa

THE VIOLENT FRIENDS. By Winston Clewes. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1945. 226 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by W. S. LANDS

ANYBODY who dares to consider intimately the life of Jonathan Swift exposes himself to fierce indignation—that *saeva indignatio* immortalized in the famous epitaph. The spleen of his public life makes his Shavian imitators seem like sentimental schoolboy reformers, and his bitter thrusts and pointed barbs are lethal to this day. But the part of Swift that can stir most is his relations with Stella and Vanessa, literary romance still largely in the gossip stage. Even now after two centuries it seems to matter whether or not Swift and Stella were married and whether or not he and Vanessa were more than platonic friends. The character of this famous triangle has stirred authors as remote as Scott, Thackeray, and Carl Van Doren. For us, a generation in which every reader is his own little psychoanalyst, the subject is a natural.

Winston Clewes, we are told on the jacket, wrote this novel in order to prepare to write a play on Swift. He is a bold man for he is challenging two others of recent date, Yeats's "The Words Upon the Windowpane" and the Earl of Langford's "Yahoo." The Clewes play, we are informed, is already a success in England.

For his novel the author has dwelt on that decade of Swift's life that begins with his becoming Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin and ends with the death of Stella. This is without doubt the most romantic period in Swift's life. Even from the standpoint of his literary contributions it is one of the most interesting, including as it does the "Drapier's Letters," his other Irish pamphlets, and "Gulliver's Travels." Out of these rich materials the author has wrought a novel which, while following faithfully Swift's history as we know it, allows him to form a convincing and moving story. Imaginative biography is at best one of those Scylla and Charybdis things where the author must avoid the creaky documentation of literary carpentry on the one hand and the *dernier cri* theorizing of a Maurois's "Ariel" on the other. Winston Clewes steers well between them though the monster's cave and the whirlpool are dangerously close at times.

He gives us the Swift we expect, misanthropic and bitter, rude to his friends, envenomed and ill, hating all mankind, but showing in his greater hatred for evil and stupidity that inner tenderness which he hid even from himself though not from Stella. His Vanessa is fierce and passionate, determined in her bower at Cellbridge to have the man she pursued to Ireland; while Stella, cool and tender,— " . . . have you ever thought, Jonathan, how fortunate you were to find a cold woman for your friend?"—is nevertheless warm enough to seem to hope their marriage might eventually be a normal one and sufficiently a woman to be mortally hurt by Vanessa's letter. The famous letter sets off the most romantically dramatic part of the book, with Swift's fury at Vanessa rising to the grand climax of his self-despising repulse of her embrace.

St. Patrick's Close and Cathedral in Dublin.

The usual reasons given for Swift's harsh celibacy are all expressed at sometime or other in the story, but the motivating ones are his drive to place intellect over lust and his determination to risk adding no offspring of his to the contemptible "rascaldom and knavery of the world."

Interwoven with Dean Swift's romances are his crusades to defend the Ireland he hated from English avarice and indifference. His battles against a policy that would give no manufactures to the Irish and against a corrupt court that would permit a dishonest ironmonger to flood the land with debased coinage have made Swift a hero in Ireland to this day. And however much he may have despised the masses of people his courage in defending them can only win our admiration. Mr. Clewes has set forth these events with effective skill and color.

All in all, there is in this novel a distinguished handling of personalities and events that have challenged some of the best writers in the English language. It lacks, perhaps, the lasting sentiment of a literary biographical novel like "The Jessamy Bride" on Goldsmith or Rose Macaulay's sureness of touch in her book on Herrick, "The Shadow Flies." But reading it is definitely a satisfying experience. Whoever writes of Swift and the riddle of his loves is faced with the perplexing lines of his poem to Vanessa:

Must never to Mankind be told
Nor shall the conscious Muse unfold.

Tree and House

By Louise Townsend Nicholl

THE spread of the house and the tree were the same,
The sycamore covered the house like a veil.
In the spell of November, the summer in fall,
The time of the pallid and crystalline flame,
Stood the house in enthrallment, embossed and embraced
By the broad-spreading plane tree, gigantically pale,
The limbs archaistically posed and emplaced—
Heraldic, traditional, branches to wall,
A mesh linked and fitted, a silvery mail.

The tree and the house were a unit, a mural,
Whose pattern and look held some meaning, some moral,
The clue to a magic too old to remember,
The ancient agreement in all that is timber,
Revealed in the motionless glass of November—
A power and property not understood
For effecting a mythical, natural union,
Containing the god but assuming the human,
The mystical marriage implicit in wood.

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Seeing Things with Mr. Wechsberg

LOOKING FOR A BLUEBIRD. By Joseph Wechsberg. Illustrated by F. Strobel. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1945. 210 *pp.* $2.50.

Revieved by ROBERT PICK

MR. WECHSBERG was early a refugee from boredom—a fugitive from that monotony of Central European professional life which had little opportunity to offer to the more enterprising, and no outlet whatsoever for the more adventurous, elements of the new generation. Even in Czechoslovakia, the most prosperous of Middle European countries, youth was hemmed in by the traditional pattern of a one-track career, on the one hand, and a virtual stoppage of overseas emigration, on the other. It took more than a mere decision to flee, as this author did at the age of eighteen, the "third largest city of Czechoslovakia."

He was, and still is, a musician—or rather, an itinerant fiddler, to use the irreverent term Mr. Wechsberg's publishers employ in their blurb. His music gift brought the landlubber aboard the ships which he was to make his home for quite a number of years—as a violinist first and an orchestra leader later. Occasionally interrupted by longer or shorter stretches as secretary to a Prague *député,* opera claqueur, croupier, a bit of soldiering, or some free-lance writing, his seafaring life seems to have developed, as it has in others before, an unusual skill as a raconteur and a spinner of yarns. After he came to this country—he is in the Army now—Mr. Wechsberg began to write down what he had seen, and he did it his own way. A growing group of connoisseurs became enthusiasts for his stories in *The New Yorker* and *Esquire.* Put between covers now, with a light-hearted contempt for the usual biographical chronology, these tales make an altogether delightful book.

Mr. Wechsberg must have a definite talent for attracting odd people, or else he is really that *rara avis* called humorist whose most precious asset has always been to see people's oddities. To people in general Etienne-Marcel, a retired bass-player from Brussels who once a year goes to Japan to see his son and pays for his round-trip by taking a job with the liner's orchestra, might seem just another somewhat elderly, bearded fellow, reduced in means; in Mr. Wechsberg's sketches he becomes a lifesize figure who in fooling people displays as much gusto and natural dignity as in his acceptance of their teasing. Or that old-timer Monsieur Arnould, director in charge of the French Line's musical personnel who against his better judgment catapults onto a New York-bound steamer an underpaid bank clerk from Prague who from afar has fallen in love with Wall Street! The whimsical, good-hearted, aged musician is, to be sure, a shop-worn stock figure of both movies and popular magazine stories; but how human this particular old bass-player grows from the moment he makes "an impressive entrance through a side door" up to his final "'One likes to see people happy . . . But that was not a very good one you tried to pull on me this afternoon.'"

It would be fun to present to potential readers the whole motley crew of Mr. Wechsberg's friends, let alone to recount some of the fast ones they have pulled on one another or, preferably, on people with a higher social standing than their own. But such a line-up would deprive future readers of most of their pleasure, and could not possibly succeed in conveying in advance that mixture of well-meaning irony, freshness (in either sense of the word), and—yes—melancholy which gives to these stories their entirely unique flavor.

The melancholy which seasons the author's obvious unconcern for bourgeois comfort and his underlying *je m'en fichisme* shows both the astuteness and the sympathy of a man who has watched the human comedy on the fringes of settled society with the passionate curiosity of an amateur entomologist. Some will inevitably compare this new author to Bemelmans. Others will call his stories a bunch of tall tales. On the latter score I am willing to vouch for the truth of every inch of detail in the three chapters dealing with the Vienna opera claque and Herr Schostal's heroic exploits as its chief and master. Why then should the rest of the book be less true? But as I said before, Mr. Wechsberg *sees* things—which may sometimes be somewhat different from, but always is more than, the historical truth, whatever that is. In short, this humorist is a grand writer. He is the winner of a Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship. The Boston judges deserve to be congratulated on their choice.

Joseph Wechsberg has a definite talent for attracting odd people.

Retrospect

By Charles Bruce

STRANGE to have found, in the dust of this late day,
The old faith and frankness, the shared sun,
The shared wanting and liking;
The understanding and the mirth we put away
Years ago, when the time came to accept
Another time; and the time of our own was done.

No promise ever made, yet a promise kept;
And stranger still to find it now and here
When living is wrapt in a world's wheeling and striking:
And to stay and think,
In the heart of this purpose, back to a wistful year—
The rough drone of a press and the wet-small smell of ink.

The questioning mind looks back, and finds and forms
Habits and images that marked us after
The old doorway closed. Never so much
Of new and old merged in our dreams before; and the mind warms
To this new grace in long-remembered laughter,
And the blood pounds at your touch.

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Bypaths of Frustrated Pacifism

THE POWER HOUSE. By Alex Comfort. New York: The Viking Press. 1945. 464 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by JOHN FARRAR

MR. COMFORT has written two previous novels, four books of poems, and three plays. He is, according to his publishers, "the voice of a new generation—a voice that will be heard." He was born in 1920, and "qualified for medicine" in 1944. Since I have not read any of his other work, although some of his poetry has appeared in American magazines, I must contemplate "The Power House" as of itself. Mr. Comfort is further described as "the leader of an active group of younger English writers." I gather that this is a group mentally interested in the war, but not active in the war—although my intelligence being spotty (or, as a G-2 friend of mine would put it, "Grade four intelligence") I may be doing them an injustice.

"The Power House" (and, by the way, didn't John Buchan once use this title?) is certainly among the few challenging books of fiction produced by a young man in these war years. It marks Mr. Comfort as an author of remarkable talent, possibly of genius. It should be read by everyone interested in young writers, and in the tortured thinking of those attempting to reason their way through the shadowy bypaths of frustrated pacifism. I hope many people will struggle their way through this amazing volume. For that reason I have attempted to write the above quote for future advertisement of the book. When the publishers say that Mr. Comfort's is a "voice that will be heard," I agree with them. When they say his is a voice "of a new generation," I am inclined to follow Mr. Comfort's method in dealing with the strong language of war, with —! Mr. Comfort seems to me to be a hangover of the past, of the sad boys at Oxford and Cambridge, with their sad counterparts in other lands and here at home. He has all the equipment of a fine writer, but, I suspect and hope, none of the equipment of a political leader.

"Sometimes one is set as it were above history," Mr. Comfort writes, "whether by a configuration of the landscape, or by chance, like the ship that wandered under full sail through the fleets at the Falkland Islands, rarely by intention." Mr. Comfort's own intention is definite and noble. He tells us the story of his power house, of his slaughter house; of France at war and in occupation, of labor struggle and sabotage, of every noble intention turned to dust, of the perversion, insanity, and ruin of war and revolution.

This is a novel about which one would like to write long essays instead of short reviews. In its turgid and confused pages are elements of greatness and in its parade of jumbled characters are various sets of people who have not been able to seize the nettle of war. Yet we find them saying such sharp things as: "One girl kept saying, 'Poor France,' and another one expected to be collected to support the local brothel at any moment."

The theme of physical and mental impotence is a challenging one. Fougueux, the worker, struggling toward sexual fulfilment; Vernier, the intellectual, the anarchist, struggling toward mental health, are both parallel and opposed in this complicated symbolism. But just why Fougueux should achieve his end at the moment of the fall of France, I wouldn't know, and when Vernier says, "I'm impotent, too . . . my mind used to work once"—I do not believe the author means it, and what should be one of the grand climaxes of the novel, worked up to through many lengthy scenes of both physical and mental pawings and gropings, fails.

It is almost impossible to believe that the latter part of this novel was written by the same man who wrote the first, so much power and simplicity of narration develop. In the earlier pages, there are not only the mannerisms of the politically self-conscious but a curious unwillingness to state clearly where the reader is expected to locate himself, so to speak. The use of figures of speech is constant and confusing. The sensory impressions are piled so thick that no ordinary set of senses could absorb them. Mr. Comfort should consult with those self-ordained specialists in stylistic horror, Cleanth Brooks and other editors of *The Kenyon Review*, on this point. Perhaps something would come out of such a conference!

—*Howard Coster*

Alex Comfort is an author of remarkable talent, possibly of genius.

Colors are used in profusion but they seem to have no mounting visual effect. And smells! If Comfort could give us as accurate a sense of where he wants us to be, of location, of time, as he does of smell, it would increase the effectiveness of his style. I can remember few novelists who are so led around by their own noses, with the possible exception of Thomas Wolfe. (Mr. Comfort, by the way, must have read him. Also I suspect that he has read R. C. Hutchinson, whose "The Unforgotten Prisoner" he has aped but not absorbed. Also Ford Madox Ford; also Joseph Conrad. But he has not yet absorbed anything from them but their idiosyncracies.)

I am attempting to urge readers to this book. With this in mind, I suggest a game. I suggest that the reader start, instead of at the beginning, at Book Two, page 139, reading on through page 258, through the words, "Which wandered up and down the column." Then turn to the beginning, read through, and pick up on page 258 with the words, "In a few hundred years, they passed a hole in the ground." I'd be interested to know how this experiment would work. I suspect Mr. Comfort's intention would be much clearer if this procedure were followed.

When this novel finally swings into narrative, it is superb. And in the battle episodes it is interesting to note that the author abandons his poetical decorativeness. The mannerisms vanish, the political ideologies fall away, the man forgets he is an anarchist or whatever he thinks he is. He even forgets he is a poet. He emerges stark naked, just a good writer.

As for the philosophical and political implications of the novel, I don't know. The author writes, "For the man of intelligence it is never the single event that matters, and to see history in detail was a cowardice." And one of his Nazi characters says, "Anything is better than remaining an individual. I know that we have a mission. History will use us—it does not matter how much evil is done."

Well, there are many writers, too busy now with other more active matters, to match Mr. Comfort's prose. It may be some time before they will be able to digest their material or produce their design. Many of us were philosophical anarchists in our youth although, unlike Mr. Comfort, most of us didn't know it. And I like to think it wasn't cynicism that made us join the herd in attaching ourselves, even though loosely, to humdrum poli-

(*Continued on page* 30)

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Looking Backward on Bellamy

EDWARD BELLAMY. By Arthur E. Morgan. New York: Columbia University Press. 1944. 468 *pp. xx.* $5.

Reviewed by ROBERT E. SPILLER

IN 1888, Edward Bellamy, of Chicopee Falls, Mass., published "Looking Backward," a Utopian novel the scene of which was laid in Boston in the year 2000. In it he predicted a bloodless social revolution which was to have occurred just about now. His thesis is that the normal tendencies of industrial democracy are wholesome and, left to themselves, they will construct a modern social order on the pattern of the Inca civilization of ancient Peru. Equalization of opportunity and centralization of power are to run their course until they create a classless socialized state without the characteristic Marxian features of dictatorship, class conflict, and revolution.

Mr. Morgan's biography is a topical study of this book and of the man who wrote it. He does much to dispel the illusion that the writing was more or less accidental, that Bellamy had, as he himself once said, "at the outset, no idea of attempting a serious contribution to the movement of social reform." There is more truth in his later statement that ideas first expressed as a young man in a village Lyceum lecture in 1872 were reawakened by a first view of real poverty in the slums of European cities. The book was a deliberate attempt to awaken people to social injustice and to provide a possible remedy for it. Sharing Hawthorne's type of moral imagination, but rejecting the Calvinistic view of sin, Bellamy devoted his life first to allegorical studies of man's wish for happiness, then to practical means for putting these ideals into effect. In "Looking Backward," the fictional purpose is blended with the sociological; in its sequel "Equality," little of the fictional interest is left. With the nation-wide development of Bellamy or Nationalist Clubs, the retiring idealist became the active social propagandist. In a few years both the man and the movement had burned themselves out, but not without leaving a lasting impression on writers, statesmen, and populace the world over. For Bellamy, in spite of his oversimplification of the issue and his childlike faith in human nature, had pointed one way by which industrial democracy might eradicate its own ills.

Time has demonstrated that Bellamy was not as visionary as some of his contemporaries thought him to be. As Mr. Morgan points out, public ownership of major utilities, direct election of senators, the merit system in civil service, income and inheritance taxes, woman suffrage, organized labor, and many other reforms which he advocated are today accepted parts of our social system. Bellamy can already be proclaimed the number one social prophet of nineteenth century America, and the amazing vogue of his book can be justified.

Yet until Mr. Morgan undertook his task, there was no published biography of this practical dreamer and no thorough critical study of his ideas and his writings. The man who defined and popularized an indigenous brand of national socialism, as different from fascism as it is from communism, the man in whom Howells discovered "a romantic imagination surpassed only by that of Hawthorne," had been evaluated neither as a social philosopher nor as a writer of fiction. His only biography, by his devoted follower Mason A. Green, had remained in manuscript, and such of his notebooks, articles, letters, and other papers as had survived had never been collected and examined. His life was almost as much of a myth as was his Utopia. Mr. Morgan not only has set out to remedy this situation by a book of his own, but he has deposited his material where for the first time it is available to others.

Unfortunately the book itself shows signs of having been crowded into the cracks of an otherwise busy life. The chapters are really separate essays, with much repetition which could have been edited out and much long quotation which could have been better blended into the narrative. Nor does it fulfill its promise of dealing with all sides of Bellamy's life and work. As a literary critic, Mr. Morgan is a total failure. In no respect does he go beyond the praise of Howells, which was both too much and too soon. He leaves Bellamy's short stories and novels as unexplored as he found them.

But he does succeed in making the life and the personality of the author of "Looking Backward" a little better understood; and he gives us a sane and sympathetic analysis of the faults and the virtues of Bellamy's social theory. For this latter task, he is eminently well-equipped by his own social idealism, expressed most effectively during his Presidency of Antioch College, and by his experience as a hydraulic engineer and past-Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Even though the promise of the book, as stated in the preface, is far from fulfilled, he has done the one job that he was fully prepared to do. He has explained how Bellamy came to develop his theory and why his Utopia has taken a place with the classic formulations of Darwin, Marx, and Freud in shaping the public mind in a changing world.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

FISH, FLESH, AND FOWL

Sister M. Genoveva, C.S.C., of Lancaster, Pa., is the contributor of this week's quiz. In column one are the names of 20 assorted animals in fiction; in column two are the authors who created them. Can you supply the title of the story and the kind of animal in columns three and four? Allowing 2½ points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, and 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 33.

Ex. Bambi	Felix Salten	Bambi	Deer
1. Zenobia	H. C. Bunner	.....	.....
2. Rab	John Brown	.....	.....
3. Bock	Christopher Morley	.....	.....
4. Imogene	Laura Richards	.....	.....
5. Owd Bob	Alfred Ollivant	.....	.....
6. Winnie	R. D. Blackmore	.....	.....
7. Salar	Henry Williamson	.....	.....
8. Flicka	Mary O'Hara	.....	.....
9. Wahb	E. T. Seton	.....	.....
10. Flag	M. K. Rawlings	.....	.....
11. Florian	Felix Salten	.....	.....
12. Cap'n Flint	R. L. Stevenson	.....	.....
13. Moby Dick	Herman Melville	.....	.....
14. Nana	James M. Barrie	.....	.....
15. Grip	Charles Dickens	.....	.....
16. Wildfire	George Eliot	.....	.....
17. Jip	Charles Dickens	.....	.....
18. Ferdinand	Munro Leaf	.....	.....
19. Rosinante	Cervantes	.....	.....
20. Black Beauty	Anna Sewell	.....	.....

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Strictly Personal

FROM HELL TO HELICON: A PREDICTION

WHEN Johnny comes marching home, the colleges and universities of his nation are going to have a whole series of problems on their hands: conversion from wartime to peacetime schedules; long-postponed repair and building programs; curriculum revision based on experience with large-scale education of great numbers of servicemen in special training schools; reconstitution of faculties depleted by the death of elder members and the war-service of younger instructors. Finally, and most important, there will be Johnny himself.

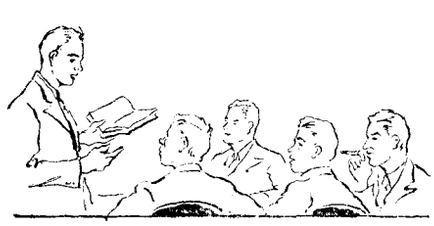
Six or eight months ago nobody could give more than a guess-embroidered answer to such questions as these: How fast and well can the average returning serviceman readjust himself to civilian and student life? What will he be like—restless, cynical, war-haunted? An irresponsible hell-raiser or a serious citizen? Resentful of civilians, scornful of youthful underclassmen? Super-critical of "impractical" college courses, clamorous for education efficiency? Will he be interested in books and ideas, or will there be evidence of a new high-tide of anti-intellectualism such as ensued upon the last war? Will he favor acceleration, or will he want to take time for the more leisurely old-style maturing process? How will he make the transition from the hell of battle to the Helicon of the college campus?

Anything like final answers to these questions must await the period of general demobilization and reconstruction. But in recent months a sufficiently large number of combat veterans has returned to the colleges and universities, so that prediction can now be made on the basis of concrete evidence.

Most educators who have had to do with returned combat veterans would probably agree that there is no overt evidence either of profound cynicism or of dominant idealism. What predominates is a business-like matter-of-factness about getting educated, and getting a start in a life which has been interrupted and disrupted, but not corrupted or bankrupt, by the requirements of this war. There is some enthusiasm for the acquisition of knowledge and the discussion of ideas. There is almost no interest in the daily course of the war unless it be for news of what one's old outfit is doing. To men who have seen action, most newspaper stories look so pale and generalized that few veterans find any use for war news as it is being purveyed. This does not mean that the war is not still very much with them, late and soon. Upon all but the most extroverted men combat has had a profound effect. In many quiet dormitory rooms nightmares appear—the flier sweats through a fall down infinite space, the infantryman dreams of being jammed full of shrapnel from an anti-personnel mine—but in the mornings the sun rises, and the combat veterans go about their classroom business like other serious citizens.

Some resentment towards profit-making civilians is evidently felt. Pernicious enemy propaganda has not fallen on entirely deaf ears, and there is much ill-informed, emotionally-grounded anti-labor prejudice. It has not yet become organized or especially articulate, and there is no rush on the part of returned servicemen to join national organizations for veterans. Anticipating that these things may well happen in the future, many colleges are initiating gripe-sessions for servicemen centering on problems like labor-relations or industrial organization in order to suffuse the prejudice problem with the light and air it needs.

Twelve months ago when many universities were making plans for the reception of veterans, there was talk in some quarters of segregating returned servicemen in one area of the campus, and of giving them separate classroom instruction. The theory evidently was that veterans would be clannish anyhow, and that they would not want to sit in class with beardless youths who were at the same academic level with them. The theory, which was immediately questioned by many educational authorities, is not being justified by the facts. Combat veterans naturally tend to drift together but not to isolate themselves from civilian students. The veterans are looked up to and listened to by those not yet old enough to enter the Army.



Also contrary to some previous expectations is the attitude of veterans towards the liberal arts curriculum. It was early feared that this highly technical war might permanently convert many boys in the college age-groups to scientific and technological subjects, and divert them from the humanities and social sciences. Again the evidence fails to support the conclusion. It is a safe bet that in the postwar period the proportions of technologists and liberal arts men will return rapidly to normal. The man who was willing to study highly technical subjects in order to help win the war will very likely lose that willingness when the war is won, unless, of course, he was a born technologist to start with. Faculty advisers now know that the courses of study they recommend to veterans must make demonstrable educational sense, and must add up to something pretty tangible in the way of information. As long as that basic rule is followed, the veteran still thinks of his faculty adviser as the educational doctor, and is willing to follow his prescriptions.

The provisions of Public Law 16 (for disabled veterans) and Public Law 346 (the G.I. Bill) are such that most veterans are now accelerating to the extent of attending college the year round. Many ex-servicemen are in the market for quick business and trade-school courses, so that they can get started in their life occupations. But most of those who apply for entrance to liberal arts colleges are in no great rush to finish. They are there to get as much as they can, and with a few exceptions they are working hard and seriously. This helps to corroborate what educators have long suspected: that the colleges can do a major job in the postwar period by helping to cushion the impact of great numbers of returning servicemen on the domestic economy.

No informed educator thinks that the task of colleges in the period of demobilization will be short or easy. The dean of a large men's college in New England predicted the other day that "for at least two years after the end of hostilities, we will be enrolling married air-corps colonels in the freshman class," and that the first "normal" (*i.e.*, veteranless) freshman classes will probably enter American colleges in the fall of 1950. The total picture will be further complicated if compulsory peacetime military training becomes the law of the land. But the experience with returned veterans now being gained in the colleges will help educators to anticipate the problems of the ex-soldier-student, and to plan intelligently for his mass reception.

CARLOS BAKER.

Carlos Baker is Special Adviser, Princeton Program for Servicemen.

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WHO ARE THE REAL PEOPLE?

JOHN STEINBECK likes to get a rise out of his readers. He likes to ruffle them and startle them with the unexpected and the bizarre. He likes to write, for example, of a brothel as a "decent, clean, honest, wholesome" place (as in "Cannery Row"), where the customers get their money's worth and where the working girls are decent, clean, honest, wholesome, etc., in contrast to the "twisted and lascivious sisterhood of married spinsters whose husbands respect the home but don't like it very much."

Our purpose here is not to take issue with Mr. Steinbeck's high regard for decent, clean, honest, wholesome persons or institutions. After all, he isn't the first to call attention to or glorify the career bed. It was pretty much of a literary chestnut even when DeMaupassant wrote about it in "Madame Tellier's Establishment." It is pertinent only as it illustrates Mr. Steinbeck's unfailing devotion to the reverse twist under any circumstances. So much so that his unpredictableness becomes almost predictable. It is a familiar literary device having a certain effectiveness but sometimes it wears thin and shows through. When it does, it has all the charm and winsomeness of an old hangnail.

If you grant that Steinbeck's own ideas or beliefs may frequently be subordinated to the requirements of his literary devices or technique, you can avoid either the bother or the pleasure of rising to his bait; that is, you are willing to give him a liberal allowance because of his perquisites as a novelist. But there comes a point where you are certain that his technique represents an authentic and precise vehicle for his own convictions. At such a point, it is both legitimate and pertinent to ask questions.

In particular, we should like to ask questions about Mr. Steinbeck's obsession with what he likes to call "real people." It is not a solitary obsession, to be sure: other writers in what has been termed the school of modern realist writing share it. Ernest Hemingway, particularly in his novel of thugs, rum runners, and murderers, "To Have and Have Not," and in many of his other novels and short stories, demonstrates a predilection, if not an admiration, for his own brand of real people.

But who are these real people, what are they like, that they should thus command the attention and affection of these writers? In Steinbeck's case, the answers are both available and explicit in "Cannery Row"—even more, perhaps, than in its atmospheric predecessor, "Tortilla Flat." Steinbeck's "real people" are the well-meaning, big-hearted, coarse, ignorant bums, boobs, castoffs, and misfits of both sexes. "They survive in this particular world better than other people. In a time when people tear themselves to pieces with ambition and nervousness and covetousness, they [the castoffs, etc.] are relaxed. All of our so-called successful men are sick men, with bad stomachs, and bad souls, but Mack and the boys are healthy and curiously clean. They can do what they want. They can satisfy their appetites without calling them something else."

These "real people" of Steinbeck's are amusing enough and make good copy, but we are neither impressed nor convinced. Mr. Steinbeck has made special pets of them, and exhibits them as though they were anything but real. They are big, rough, and tough, and know how to guzzle pot likker, even if they don't know the difference between drinking and soaking. They're innocent as babes and delightfully dumb, and they have an instinct for kindness and gratitude that is as touching as it is menacing. Beware that gratitude as you would a bear-trap. The "real people" get tied into knots and they slide unsuspectingly into the gol-durndest brawls you ever saw, with split heads, bashed faces, and broken ribs as common as frogs in a pond at midnight. F'rinstance, they want to do something nice for a friend, whom they all love and respect, so they throw him a party while he is away and smash up his laboratory until the place looks like a heap of broken glass. The highspot of the evening is a "long, happy, and bloody battle that took out the front door and broke two windows."

Now this is all very stirring and refreshing. It is good to see decent, clean, honest, wholesome human beings acting in such a natural and unrepressed manner. They don't "tear themselves to pieces with ambition and nervousness and covetousness," and they know how to relax. There is no point in bringing Freud into all this, but you can't help admiring their magnificent lack of self-restraint—a real tonic for the real psyches of real people. Consider, too, their superb constitutional equipment. Contrast them with the unreal people who have stomach ulcers and various other disorders as the result of nervous living. Mr. Steinbeck's people are invariably healthy. Not an instance of cirrhosis of the liver, delirium tremens, polyneuritis, Korsakoff psychoses, or Saturday-night-paralyses in the carload. Doubtless, all his castoffs, bums, procurers, deadbeats, sporting girls, and madams die in the sublime beauty of their old age. But don't bet on it.

Apart from the ludicrous, there is something both curious and perilous about Mr. Steinbeck's preoccupation with and worship of these "real people," as distinct from all others. Curious, because he himself treats them more as phenomena than as the substance of reality; perilous, because there are inevitable concomitants of anti-culturalism and anti-intellectualism that cannot be separated from the original obsession. These by-products are more than vaguely reminiscent of a remark by an incipient hasbeen who once said that when he heard the word culture he reached for his gun. Maybe Adolf H. never actually said it; maybe it was Hermann or Little Joseph or one of the others. But whoever said it, everyone knows or should know what it meant.

We admit the urgency for a novelist to break away from the stuffy and synthetic atmosphere of penthouse cocktail parties, and to associate himself with the more valid feel of large numbers of people living a less glorified life. But there is also a danger that he may lose his balance in going in the other direction—the danger that he may become patronizing and try to turn people into something special or freakish. It should be at least possible to write about the mainstream of humanity without putting a halo on the half-wit, deifying the drunk, or canonizing the castoff.

We are not saying that Mr. Steinbeck's gallery is not filled with real people. They may be real enough, but we'll be hanged if we will genuflect before them or regard them as a master race. Besides, we have devised our own test for determining whether people are real. It is infallible. You take a long, sharp pin and jab it into the arm. If blood comes out, and if the blood is red, then the person is real.

N. C.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

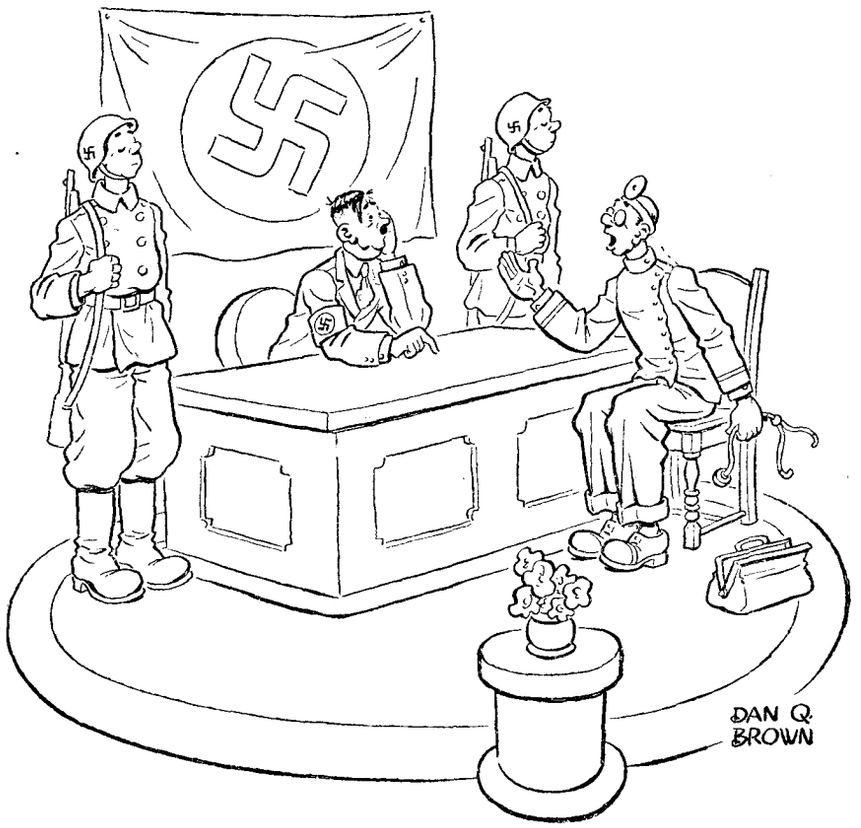
Letter from the Editors

Several thousand readers have been kind enough to coöperate with *SRL's* Format Headache Editor by filling in the questionnaire published in the issue of December 9, 1944. The final tabulation establishes the following:

1. Overwhelming opposition to reduction in type size.
2. Fairly even division on the question of combining all the non-fiction reviews under a general non-fiction heading, and all the fiction reviews under a general fiction heading.
3. Fairly general dissatisfaction with the proposal to reduce photographs of authors to half column width.
4. General satisfaction with the present proportion of book reviews to articles and features. However, fourteen per cent felt *SRL* published too many reviews and wanted more articles; ten per cent wanted fewer articles and more reviews.
5. Approximately eighty per cent of the readers were untroubled by the present thin cover paper stock.
6. Comment most frequently expressed was that the magazine should run longer reviews of really important books, with shorter, more concise treatment for the usual run-of-the-mill book.
7. The result of reader's balloting on most and least popular departments shall have to be kept a family secret for reasons of literary diplomacy. However, we shall certainly take their preferences into account in any new plans for the magazine.

SRL's Format Headache Editor joins the other editors in thanking the readers for their help, and he reports that his headache, though not completely gone, is definitely getting better.

THE EDITORS.



"Your symptoms indicate a frustrated personality . . . can you recall any disappointments in your life?"

Mr. Swope on the Old "World"

The author of the following letter was Executive Editor of The World *in New York from 1920 to 1928.*

SIR: I read with interest and mixed reaction Virginius Dabney's "What's Wrong With The Newspaper Editorial?" I found myself in agreement with the writer, for whom I hold high personal regard, as long as he stayed in the field of opinion, but when he went into the factual—the historical—I could not follow him. He writes:

> After Pulitzer's death, *The World* maintained its popularity and prestige for a decade or more, but then Frank Cobb died, and the decline began. *The World* was not the same thereafter.

Let's look at the record:

The World reached its high point in circulation—591,818—in 1928. Frank Cobb, one of the best editorial writers I ever knew, because he was one of the best newspapermen, not a narrow, insular opinioned type, died in 1923. He had been ill for a year before. It happened to be after his death that *The World* did some big things.

In its news columns and its editorial page, it thundered effectively against the Teapot Dome scandal (the records will show the contribution *The World* made to this exposure, and Senator Wheeler will testify to it); it exposed and destroyed the Ku Klux Klan; it smashed the Peonage System in southeastern states.

It forced the correction of the shameful conditions imposed upon the mine workers in West Virginia.

It led in the exposure of Jess Smith, Harry Daugherty, and other scandal figures of the Harding Administration, etc., etc.

In the period of time elapsing between the death of the great Cobb and 1929, *The World* was awarded three medals for public service by the School of Journalism at Columbia—and, because of the connection of Pulitzer with that institution, it was doubly hard for a *World* man to win recognition from the school.

The World brought into its readers' focus in this period a group including Heywood Broun; F. P. A.; Alexander Woollcott; Laurence Stallings; William Bolitho; Deems Taylor; Dudley Nichols; Charles Michelson; Harry Hansen, and other whose feuilletons ornamented the "Op. Ed. Page," which was invented by *The World* (by me) —a page of opinion—interesting opinions—with factual journalism barred from this mental playground.

I cannot see how Dabney justifies the phrase "Frank Cobb died and the decline began."

I was Executive Editor of *The World* from 1920 until the end of 1928, and a member of the Council, which included Ralph Pulitzer, F. D. White, Frank Cobb, and myself, with Arthur Krock acting as secretary. For a while, John O'Hara Cosgrave was also a member.

I claim the credit for bringing Walter Lippmann to the paper when Frank sickened and died. He acted as Chief Editorial Writer from Frank's death until my resignation. Then he became Editor of the paper and held on for the more than two years during which *The World* continued after I left.

Unquestionably Cobb's virility, understanding, and forthrightness were missed, but it was a good editorial page that Lippmann put together, and it was quick to support the campaigns that were intended to serve the public purpose and not merely to gain circulation.

I think Dabney has telescoped his memories. He recalls *The World* of 1922 (when Cobb fell ill) and fails to remember the important work that was done thereafter.

I had left two or three years before *The World* was finally sold, but I think an injustice is done when reference is made to the sale as a debacle. *The World* was sold for a good, round sum. Probably the cause of the sale was inherent in the will of Joseph

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Pulitzer, a will as characteristically bad as are most wills left by great journalists.

Joseph Pulitzer wanted to institutionalize his paper. In fact, he appointed Charles Evans Hughes Chairman of a Board of Trustees, which was to run the paper, and Hughes had accepted, but was prevented from going through with the program by his appointment to the Supreme Bench.

Beyond the exercise of this right to disagree with certain aspects of your lead story, I find Dabney right in several of his conclusions regarding the decline of the editorial page. I think the reason is plain—many of the writers are engaged with subjects about which they have little knowledge, and have done too little research. Too many of them write to order. There is no understanding; no freshness. If the primary purpose of an editorial is to promote agreement, or to promote disagreement—to cause readers to take thought—then most editorials are flops, for most do neither.

After all, you cannot get out of a paper more than you put into it, and you cannot put into a paper more than you've got. There are some glorious exceptions, but too often editorialists are half-way men—neither good reporters nor good editors. Too many newspapermen are today concerned merely with good writing instead of good thinking.

The Daily News probably has the best editorial page that can be found in a long day's hunt. This doesn't mean I agree with *The News;* it does mean, however, that it rarely leaves me apathetic. It is *must* reading for me and for those of my friends who are in what might be called the upper bourgeois classes. It represents a viewpoint and an extraordinary facility in expressing it. And it has one thing that no other page in America has: of the paper's readers, fifty-nine per cent of the men and forty per cent of the women read its editorials; the usual percentage is about eight.

This wide readership is not to be attributed to acceptance of attitude; it is a sort of readiness—of desire—to hear interesting opinions. It is the form—the freedom from cant—the absence of formalism—that gives the page its compulsion.

You should have an article on this phenomenon.

HERBERT BAYARD SWOPE.

New York, N. Y.

SIR: All honor to Mr. Swope for his important and arresting innovations during his tenure as executive editor of *The World,* and for the paper's unquestionably brilliant achievements during that period. I had no individual or group in mind when I wrote that after Frank Cobb died, "the decline began." The fact is that a newspaper which was supreme in the early 1920's ceased to exist in the early 1930's. In other words, a trend set in after Cobb's death and however gradual it may have been at the outset, it ended in extinction for the paper. Such a trend must have been a "decline," or I don't know the meaning of the word.

VIRGINIUS DABNEY.

Richmond, Virginia.

"What Can the Jew Do?"

SIR: Is there room for another comment on the controversy evoked by David Cohn's excellent paper? One of your contemporaries published last summer an article, "Who Persecutes Boston?" The subject was the alleged persecution of the Jew by the Irish-Catholic of that city.

A "Yankee" lawyer of a noted Boston firm spoke in great praise of the article. When asked how many Jews were employed by his firm, he answered with surprise, "Why, none, of course. It is an unwritten rule of the office not to employ any."

Here was a man concerned over isolated instances of street fights on the part of young hoodlums, totally unconscious that he was party to the general betrayal of every principle for which our men, Jew and Gentile, are fighting in all parts of the world today. I agree with Dorothy W. Goodfellow; "What we need is education from the top down."

TERESA S. FITZPATRICK.

Boston, Mass.

First Things First

SIR: Georges Duhamel, asked if he would write again in a Liberated France, answered in a brief article in *Figaro,* quoted recently in *France-Amérique* (Jan. 28). His statement may be paraphrased in brief as follows:

Yes, after four years of stubborn silence, he will take up his pen and make good use of the supreme liberty, liberty to think and write. But first, he must experience to the full this joy of freedom, not in his study, but in the streets of his native city, mingling with the people whom he loved in grief and whom he finds worthy of their joy. He wants to admire French youth, salute the liberators, wonder at the genius of French window displays, exchange a wink with the debonnaire traffic police.

"I want to go once, twice, thrice, all through my city, which I have seen mute and frozen in the grip of men who thought themselves conquerors, not knowing that victory is a thing of the spirit. I want to marvel at the walls, cleansed of those imbecile posters which offended the eye and wasted paper without converting anyone. I want to drink in the sounds of my wounded but happy city, no longer insulted by the sound of noisy, iron boots. . . .

"I want to see disappear every trace of German order, which, to the French spirit, represents supreme disorder, since order is justice.

"I want to go touch our ruins with my hand, reflect on our prisoners, our dead, our martyrs, pass before the walls of the jails in which so many French have suffered for our honor and our safety.

"And when I have done all these things, fulfilled these elementary duties, experienced these overpowering emotions, then I shall have earned the right to write. And I know that, from this day on, I shall not have days enough to celebrate the joy of the world and the hope of my country."

W. O. CLOUGH.

Laramie, Wyoming

The Mis-use of Incredible

SIR: A Civilization (whatever that may be) about to die is said to decay first at the top. Today, aside from the world-wide mania for violence, one sign which shocks men relatively sane and liberal is the mis-use of words. In particular, does intrusion of an incongruous word affront our intelligence when written by the Literati!

Sirs, I—a mere beggar and picker-up-of-crumbs at the Feast of the Muses, do hereby protest the mis-use of INCREDIBLE. Recently it leered at me from the pontifical pages of several solemn papers. INCREDIBLE pops up incred . . . excuse me . . . increasingly in our better magazines.

If perhaps the tallest story ever told—Creation of the Universe in Six Days—can still be taught as Holy Writ, then surely few actual or imaginable things can be INCREDIBLE. My hat with bedraggled plume in hand, may I exit backwards, first whispering to your august ears:

Now pleasant it would be, infamously rich,
To visit that huge Indian palace which
You call INCREDIBLE, *in this mad age,*
Alas, upon your own most sacred page!

JOHN L. WHITCOMB.

New York 19, N. Y.

"Democracy Under Pressure"

SIR: Mr. Herbert Harris in his review of Stuart Chase's "Democracy Under Pressure" (*SRL,* Feb. 24) says "Meanwhile, in Big Government, only the Executive and the Supreme Court can be counted on to avoid the parochial view, and to look out for the whole community."

Wanna bet?

JOHN WILLIAMS.

Lawrence, Mass.

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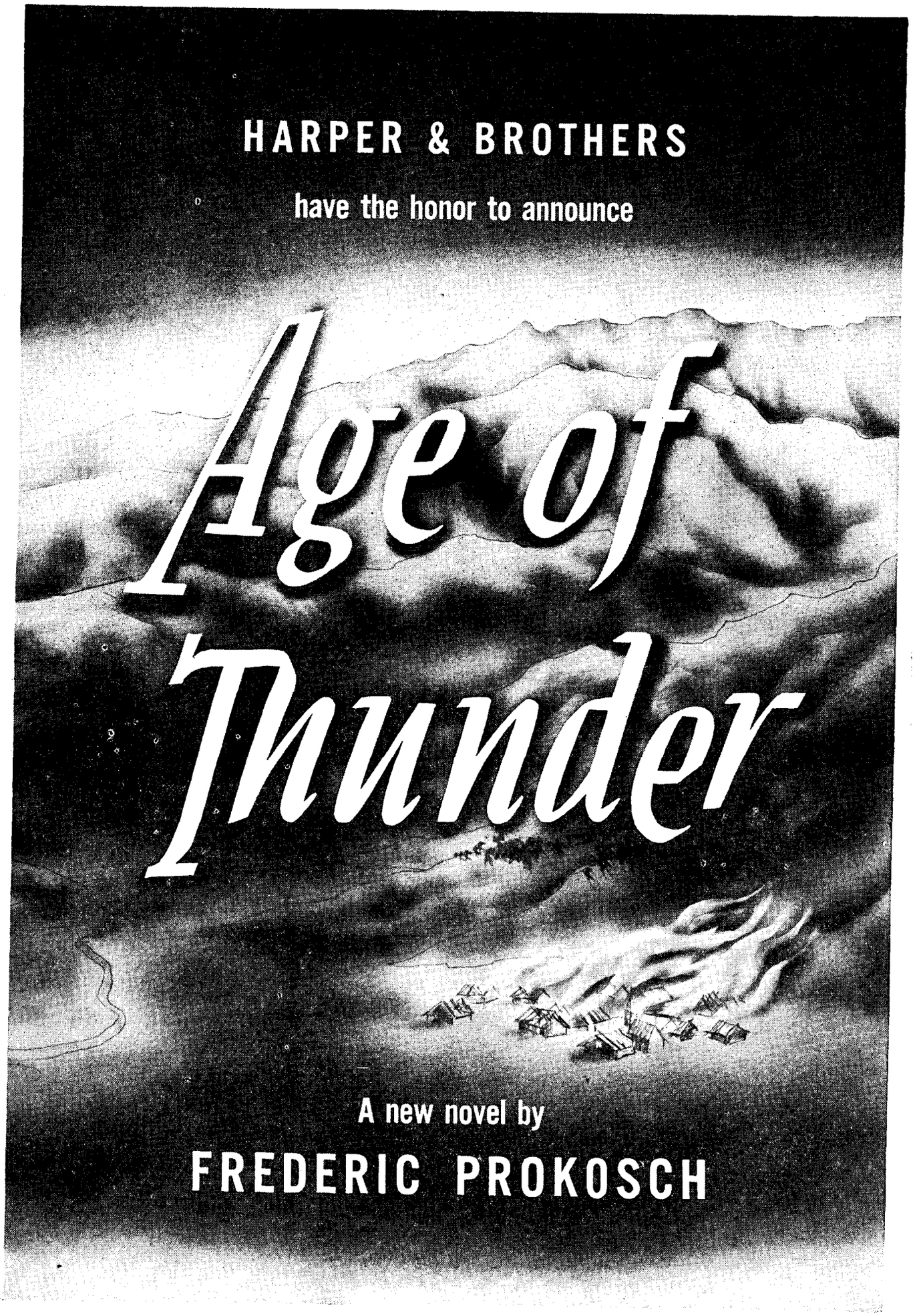

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Frederic Prokosch

author of the novels AGE OF THUNDER • THE ASIATICS • THE SEVEN WHO FLED • THE CONSPIRATORS • NIGHT OF THE POOR • THE SKIES OF EUROPE and the volumes of poetry THE ASSASSINS • THE CARNIVAL • DEATH AT SEA.

sets forth his Credo as a writer

"What I have humbly tried to do is to move a step closer to the literature of the future—which will, I feel sure, like life itself pass gradually beyond national limitations; I have tried to bring the American point of view and the European into an imaginative harmony; to sail between those deadly twins, commercialism and clique; to detect a universal and lasting pattern in each contemporary situation; to humanize intellect with feeling, and invigorate feeling with intellect; to attain a style which will neither falsify nor deaden, but at all times illuminate; and above all, never to forget that man is now as always a terrifying animal who can be clearly perceived only through the cooperating powers of compassion, fearlessness, and love."

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The measure of his Achievement can be gauged by the response of Major critics in Europe and America

***The Times* (London):** "It is not easy to assess Mr. Prokosch's contribution to the contemporary novel. What is sure is that, in years to come, it will appear considerable. His quality is unique; he falls into no school. Without ever assuming a position of rebellion or experiment, he has quietly cast the mantle of myth over each of his tales. In each there is an exaltation of mood which colors every action and draws it into the area of legend. He is never a journalist, never a mere photographer. His characters become depersonalized, detemporized, and linger on in the mind as symbols—as do the characters in a ballad or an epic, or in a medieval painting. Yet there is no writer more sensitive, and intellectually so as well as esthetically, to the malaise of our time; the sense of the precarious invades every scene. His prose reflects his quality of mood and mythology, and in this sense he is a traditionalist, not an innovator. Book by book his discipline has grown, and his style is now surpassed by that of no contemporary; it has been subjugated to reflect the mood and meaning with a wonderful resilience, and precision. His narrative gifts possess a rare vitality, and his descriptive powers are quite superb. In short, he is a natural-born artist of the first quality, and his work possesses a radiance which the passage of time will not dim but enhance."

Thomas Mann, on *The Asiatics:* "Among the most brilliant and original achievements of the generation."

Carl Van Doren, on *The Asiatics:* "Original in conception, beautiful in execution. It belongs with the most notable modern American books." (From his preface to the Readers' Club edition.)

Frank Swinnerton, on *Night of the Poor:* "A feast for the eye and ear and reflective imagination."

The New York Times Book Review, on *The Seven Who Fled:* "Its exquisite prose, imaginative splendor, and profound emotional content mark it as a memorable novel."

The Manchester Guardian, on *The Skies of Europe:* "By all odds the most brilliant as well as the most penetrating portrait of pre-war Europe."

Clifton Fadiman: "A remarkable writer, wielding a style of great elegance and aristocracy; often witty, often profound, always disturbing."

William Butler Yeats: "Mr. Prokosch's gift is one which strikes me as astonishing. It is rich and immediate, musical always; the talent of a real visionary, and often magical."

Stephen Spender: "If Mr. Prokosch gives free rein to his extraordinary and resplendent imagination, he will write some of the greatest poetry of our time."

J. Donald Adams, in *The New York Times:* "Of the younger American poets —none whose work I know seems to me to have the power and the beauty, both actual and potential, which I find in the poetry of Frederic Prokosch."

Sir Hugh Walpole: "Here, I am sure, is an absolutely new genuine talent who should mean a lot to American literature."

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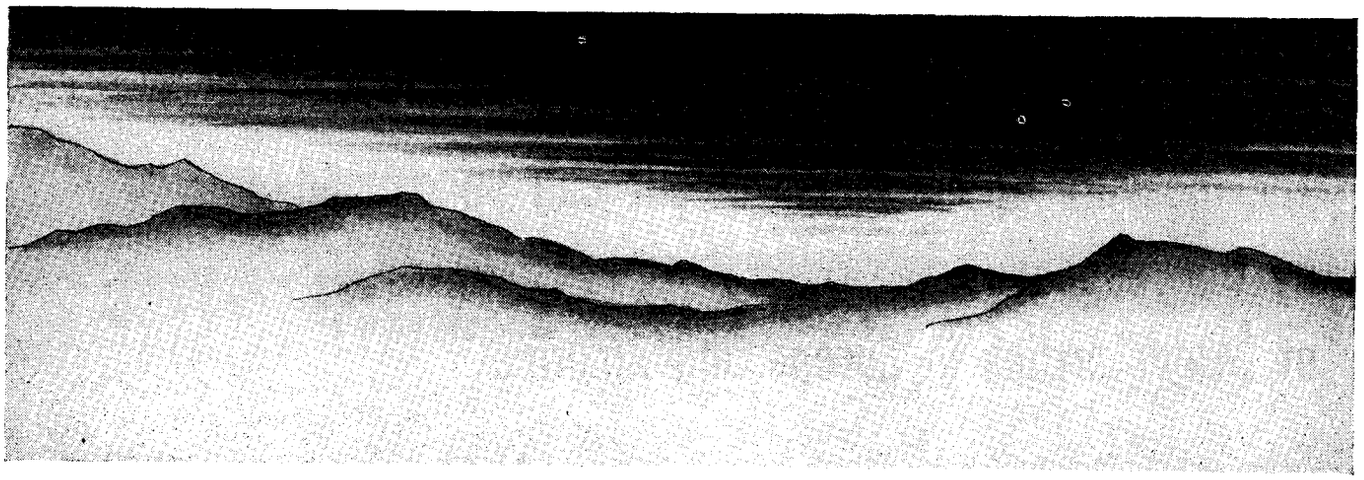

Age of Thunder

By FREDERIC PROKOSCH

AGE OF THUNDER is above all a story of our time. It is the thrilling narrative of a secret journey across occupied France—the journey of Jean-Nicolas, bound on a strange mission. But it is far more than the record of an adventure accomplished against the terrible odds of war. It is a poignant revelation of the spiritual crisis of our age, a baring of man's essential loneliness and his eternal search for comradeship. During his five dramatic nights of traveling, Jean-Nicolas obtains a new perception of the significance of his mission, and each of his encounters—with the traitor Milliquet, with the negro Quivar, with the dying Marquise, with the lovely Susanna—brings him closer to an understanding of the plight of modern man.

AGE OF THUNDER is the most compelling novel Frederic Prokosch has written. It is one of the few authentic works of art that have come out of the war and is created with a subtlety, a grace and a power rarely found today.

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HARPER & BROTHERS

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Viewing the Setting Sun

WHAT TO DO WITH JAPAN. By Wilfrid Fleisher. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1945. 178 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by T. A. BISSON

IN his foreword to this volume, the author notes that "a pattern already exists" for dealing with Japan on the part of American officials and visiting foreign statesmen with whom he has talked. "Among them," he declares, there is "a measure of agreement" on this controversial issue that "does not prevail among the public." He believes further that the plan outlined in his book "will give a fair advance idea of the sort of peace we may expect unless there is a great change of opinion among leaders in the meantime." Since his plan thus takes on the character of a semi-official trial balloon, it deserves close scrutiny by the American public.

In its essentials the program developed by Mr. Fleisher combines a series of stringent postwar controls with a minimum of basic changes in Japan's social and political structure. Territorially, Japan would be stripped of its conquests of half a century. Destruction of fortifications and munitions plants, and surrender of all arms, would be enforced. Japan's army, navy, and merchant marine would be eliminated, leaving merely a police force for internal order and a few coast-guard and patrol vessels. War criminals would be arraigned and punished. Reparations in kind would be enacted. Education would be revised by providing a "new negative or mold of policy" for the system, not by seeking "to change all the schoolteachers or to rewrite all the textbooks."

On the economic side, the destruction of Japan's heavy industry would be made complete. After the war the Japanese might charter merchant vessels from the United Nations and buy "a limited number of planes for civilian use subject to the supervision of an Allied commission." Light industries, with foreign trade in consumer goods, would be permitted to exist. To prevent Japan's cheap goods from undermining the trade of Western nations, the Japanese "should be put on a quota basis" where competition exists. The military occupation would have to be extensive at the beginning, but should be completed as soon as possible. A naval blockade might have to be maintained for several years, with imports and exports controlled.

Changes in Japan's government would be limited mainly to reforms curtailing the role of the military-naval clique, eliminating the Elder Statesmen and the Privy Council, and increasing the Diet's powers, especially over the budget. Their reforms would be effected "by simple revisions of the Constitution." The Emperor institution would be left intact. Emperor Hirohito would be forced to abdicate in favor of a successor, but not arraigned as a war criminal. The *Zaibatsu* would be retained, since there is "at present no substitute for the business magnates." The landlords are not mentioned but are evidently to be kept.

The emphasis in this program is open to serious question. Few persons would now dispute the necessity for strict disarmament terms and rigid economic controls. But do these essentially negative measures go far enough to provide a sound basis for lasting security? Under Mr. Fleisher's plan, the old regime—Emperor system, *Zaibatsu,* landlords, and bureaucracy—is left virtually untouched. True, the militarists are excluded, but the ties which bind the military-naval leaders to the old regime are so close as to ensure a persistent effort to reincorporate them in it. Under such conditions, the hope of developing a truly representative government, and with it the emergence of a non-aggressive Japan, will be negatived at the outset. The shortcomings of the plan in these basic respects are excused on the ground that no democratic potential can be expected to exist among the Japanese people. The question arises whether, if this estimate should be proved wrong, the authors of the plan would be prepared to modify their position to the extent of welcoming a popular initiative that would be seeking more fundamental changes in Japanese society. If the answer is in the negative, we shall be turning our backs on the most effective guarantee of postwar security in the Far East.

—*Berdanier in the* Trenton *(N. J.)* Times.

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SECRET MISSION SUBMARINE

By Lt. N. L. A. JEWELL, M.B.E., D.S.C., R.N.

As told to Cecil Carnes

$2.00

The first authentic account of undersea warfare during World War II. Withheld until now for reasons of security, it discloses the epic role played by the British submarine *Seraph* in some of the most historic and rigidly censored naval exploits of the war; General Mark Clark's undersea passage to Algiers; General Giraud's rescue from under the very nose of the Gestapo; the dangerous job of reconnaissance for the invasion of Sicily; and hair-raising escapes from depth bombings. The best and most complete picture aboard a fighting submarine yet published.

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by the author of "Symphony of Murder"

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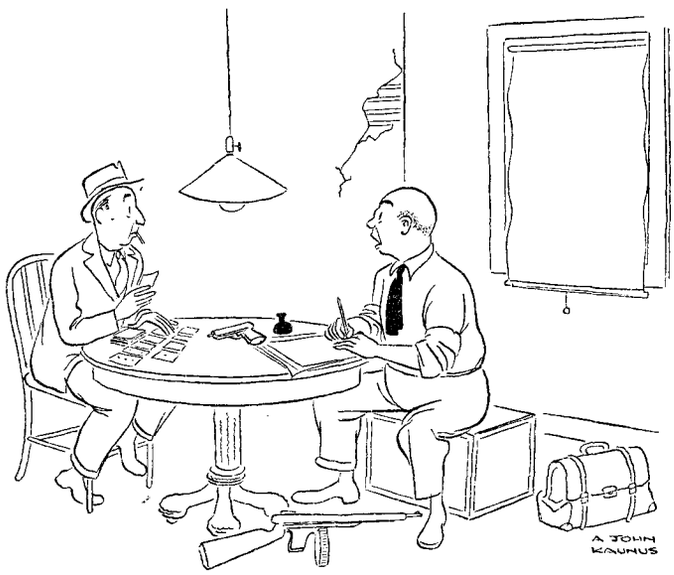
TRADE Winds

H. ALLEN SMITH, guesting on "The Books Are Bullets" radio program recently, explained how his latest compendium of wit and humor came by the unusual title of "Lost in the Horse Latitudes." Allen originally intended to call his opus "Like Elephants, I Remember," but Doubleday's wired "Elephant title terrible. It makes sense." The "horse latitudes," it seems, are certain ocean zones where the trade winds seldom blow, and where old sailing vessels were sometimes becalmed for weeks on end. When a cargo of horses was caught in one of these calms, the animals generally objected and began kicking the ship to pieces, so the sailors heaved them overboard. Is all of this quite clear?

Smith first attracted attention when he actually made people laugh at stories about the weather in the *New York World-Telegram.* From there on it was just a step up, or down, to a cushy job in Hollywood, and a trio of lusty best-sellers. I particularly like his story of Edgar Bergen's radio debut in 1936.

Bergen, then a virtually unknown ventriloquist, managed to engineer an audition for the guest spot on a Rudy Vallee program. The sponsor declared audibly that anybody who thought a ventriloquist could hold a radio audience's attention was screwy as a bird dog. Bergen was so nervous that he almost dropped his precious Charlie McCarthy, and muffed several lines in the script. The sponsor chortled derisively. An assistant waved a copy of the script at Bergen and said, "Here's your place." Bergen nodded, and the assistant moved away. "Hey," yelled Charlie, "let *me* have a gander at that script." The young man wheeled about and unthinkingly thrust the script before the wooden dummy's eyes. The sponsor stared at the spectacle, muttered "I'll be damned," and ordered "Make out a contract for that guy!" . . .

MAX WILKINSON, associate editor of *Good Housekeeping Magazine,* has been fretting over his expanding girth. The other day he got a terrific jolt when his overcoat wouldn't button in the middle. Later he discovered that two of his assistants, Marcella Powers and Kay Ruddy, had carefully moved all the buttons two inches to the right. . . . A Winston editor tried hard to cheer a disconsolate author recently. "What you should do," he counseled, "is climb out of your lonely shell. Get married, take a nice apartment in town, give parties, have children." "If you don't mind," groaned the author, "I think I'll commit suicide." . . . Some book publishers trust each other almost as much as dress manufacturers. A group of them was gathered at luncheon at the Yale Club the other day, and laughed uproariously at a timely witticism. A competitor sat nearby viewing them anxiously. "Only one thing can be *that* funny," he muttered to a companion. "I bet one of those so and sos has stolen my best author!" . . . Branch Cabell points out that old General Nathan Forrest was one man who knew how to cut straight through Army red tape. The Richmond Museum treasures a document in which an Army captain made a formal request for leave. On the back of it, the forthright general scrawled his reply: "I tol you twict, Goddamit, No!" . . . Radie Harris reports that an Eager Young Thing went to hear a famous author lecture, and noticed a sign which read "Service Men, 25 cents." She impulsively planked a dollar bill on the ticket-seller's table and said, "I'll take four sailors, please." . . .



"We pulled that bank job together, didn't we? So we gotta file a partnership return, haven't we?"

PAUL OEHSER, of the Smithsonian Institute, sends Trade Winds the following "clerihews," named after their creator, Edmund Clerihew Bentley. His highly original quatrains first appeared in 1905 in a volume called "Biography for Beginners." This is the same E. C. Bentley who later wrote the famous mystery story, "Trent's Last Case."

Sir Christopher Wren
Said "I am going to dine with some men.
If anybody calls
Say I'm designing St. Paul's."

The people of Spain think Cervantes
Equal to half-a-dozen Dantes.
An opinion resented most bitterly
By the people of Italy.

Mr. Bernard Shaw
Was just setting out for the war,
When he heard it was a dangerous trade
And demonstrably underpaid.

Sir Humphrey Davy
Abominated gravy.
He lived in the odium
Of having discovered sodium.

John Stuart Mill
By a mighty effort of will,
Overcame his natural bonhomie
And wrote "Principles of Political Economy."

The Abbe Lizt
Hit the piano with his fist.
That was the way
He used to play.

The views of Pizarro
Were perhaps a little narrow
He killed the Caciques
Because (he said) they were sneaks.

It looked bad when the Duke of Fife
Left off using a knife.
But people began to talk
When he left off using a fork.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT.—Did you read in *Time* about the St. Louis Symphony violinist who donned old clothes and dark glasses, and fiddled Paganini and Tchaikowsky on a street corner? Compassionate passers-by dropped $5.98 into his tin cup in twenty-five minutes. "I ought to quit the Symphony," he commented. "This racket has it skinned a mile!" . . . People who have heard Kurt Weil's score for "Much Ado About Love" and Rodgers and Hammerstein's first songs for "Carousel" (a musical version of "Liliom") are ecstatic. . . . Sigmund Spaeth is writing a complete history of popular music in America. . . . Both W. W.

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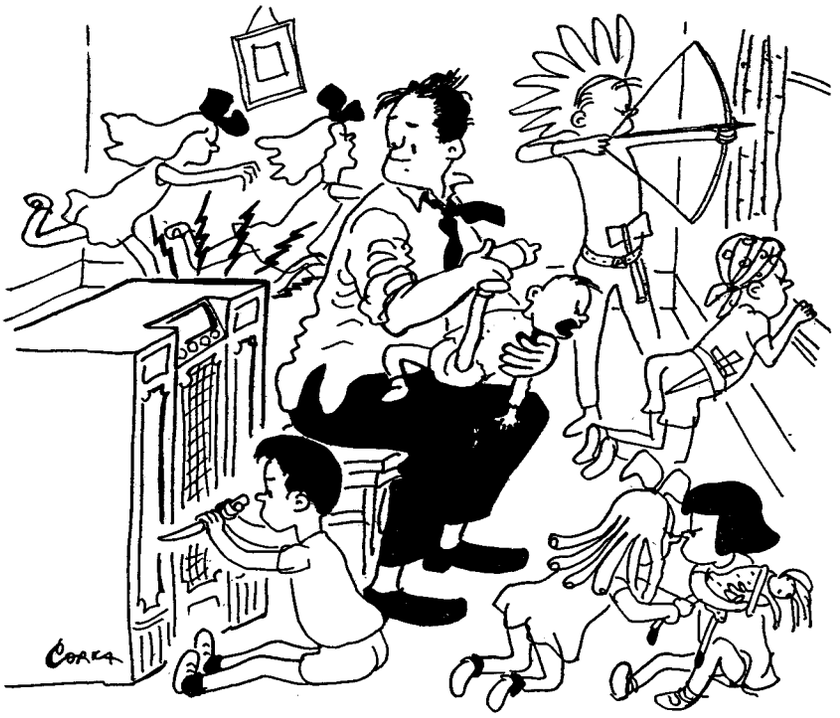


"And we must not relax our efforts . . . we must produce, produce, produce!"

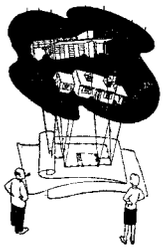
Norton and Pantheon Books are planning extensive catalogues of new books on music and musicians. . . . A spy at a famous conductor's rehearsal at the National Broadcasting Company reports that the maestro shattered even his own record for breaking batons over his knee, tearing up sheet music, and raising hell in general when a harp player, required to play one single note in a symphony, plucked the wrong string. The orchestra began over again, and when the time came for the harpist to play his note, he was so flustered that he muffed it again. The maestro strode from the rehearsal in speechless rage. When the orchestra assembled for the actual broadcast the next afternoon the harpist discovered that every string but the one he would be called upon to pluck had been removed from the instrument! . . .

EVELYN WAUGH, now a major in the British Army, has a new novel on the Little, Brown spring list. It is called "Brideshead Revisited," and the publishers say "the story begins at Oxford, and the setting gives Waugh a chance to be characteristically witty, cutting, and satiric. After Oxford, the life of the hero, Charles Ryder, seems linked to the people at Brideshead. Waugh is really telling the story of the England of the 1920's and 1930's, with left-over eccentrics mingling with the new business-political powers. In the course of his story he illuminates the modern conflict between religion and divorce." . . . Frances Winwar, author of "Oscar Wilde and the Yellow Nineties" and "Poor Splendid Wings," has notified Harper's, her publishers, that she has almost completed her new book, tentatively called "George Sand and the Romantics." . . . Billy Scherman is having the Time of his Life on Harry Luce's high-powered advertising staff. . . . Sinclair Lewis will do a monthly piece on new books for *Esquire,* beginning in June, and Charles Lee will do likewise for *Reader's Scope.* . . . On the eve of March 15, Groucho Marx informed his brother Chico, "The time has come to talk of taxes." "My friend Ravelli lives there," said Chico. "No, no," corrected Groucho. "Not Texas. Taxes. The dollars we have to pay the government." "Datsa what I said," insisted Chico. "Dallas, Texas." . . .

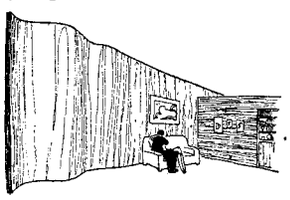
BEFORE THOUGHTFUL CROOKS did the Harry Schermans the incalculable favor of pinching their 1936 Lincoln from in front of a Riverside Drive apartment house, the Book-of-the-Month Club prexy and his intrepid wife Bernadine had some hair-raising adventures in it. One week-end Mr. Scherman, not the least impetuous driver in these parts, took a sharp turn on a dirt road near Bernardsville at about fifty miles an hour. The Lincoln skidded off the road, and it seemed that nothing in the world could stop it from tumbling into a deep ravine at the right. There was one oak tree in the way, however, and miraculously, the Lincoln wedged itself against the oak, and stopped short without a scratch. Mrs. Scherman took a deep breath, turned to her husband at the wheel, and said, "Oh, Harry! This is so unnecessary!"

BENNETT CERF.

"From where I sit"



THOMAS H. CREIGHTON, author of PLANNING TO BUILD, is also a Vermonter and the son of a bishop. If you read his excellent book, you will see that his sense of humor is anything but the dry sort we associate with New England. He is definitely not the kind of man who parts his hair in the middle and goes down to the duck farm. He lives in big cities and plans big buildings—hotels, hospitals, schools, the biggest post office in the world, and any day now I expect to see him working out a plan for Pennsylvania Station by which a man can find his eastbound incoming wife. For all its electric-eye doors, escalators, arrows, and fleets of five-cent pay toilets, this monument to human confusion is nothing but a replica of the old Roman Baths of Caracalla; and to CREIGHTON who commutes regularly to Long Island, it is doubly nightmare.



WHEN CREIGHTON plans a building, he plans it from the point of view of the people who will use it or live in it. Take the case of the church down in Vermont. A priest walked into CREIGHTON'S office, said he had been appointed pastor of the local parish, and that he had chosen this particular firm to build a new church, rectory, and parochial school. He wanted them to ignore architectural precedent completely and to build the church as if one had never been done before. This was a delight to CREIGHTON. When he planned the confessional booth, he asked the priest what position was most comfortable, and how far he had to incline to hear the confessions. When he planned the altar, he decided that the congregation must be able to see the ritual from every angle. To make this possible, he had the lectern and the railings wired so that they could be raised and lowered at the press of a button. The priest thought this was great stuff, but they couldn't clear it with Rome. Minus its jack-in-the-pulpit the church was built, and MR. CREIGHTON has done a sketch of it in PLANNING TO BUILD.

Maybe you're wondering about your post-war home—PLANNING TO BUILD covers it from larder to garret.

paul

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

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Seeing Things

CRITICAL STUMBLING-BLOCK

OF all the problems criticism presents to those who read it, write it, or provoke it, surely "Dear Ruth"* raises one of the oldest and most abiding. Why? Merely because Norman Krasna's farce-comedy does not fail. If it did, it could be easily dismissed without much blood or thought being spilt. That would be that.

"Dear Ruth," however, succeeds. By intention it is so full of corn that it bears a closer resemblance to a silo than a play. Its corn is deliberate and skilful. It is as much a part of the evening's design as it is of its fun. Because of it, "Dear Ruth" manages to do precisely what it sets out to do. This is to keep an audience in gales of contented laughter while in the theatre.

Certain comedies are easy enough to review. They are comedies of reminder; comedies which make their comments, acid or smiling, upon the foibles of mankind. They are based upon ideas. Their aim is corrective. Their wit sharpens the wits of those who sit before them. Their dialogue has style. They do not generate guffaws which have their origins in the abdomen. More often than not, their reward is that thoughtful laughter which was George Meredith's ideal. Their relationship to life is as great as their suitability to the stage. They occupy the mind even after the final curtain is down. They contrive to be both theatre and dramatic literature.

To such a clan from the highlands of comedy "Dear Ruth" makes no pretension of belonging. It renounces that royal tartan, proudly and joyfully, for what is calico—when, indeed, it is not spinach. Its only idea is to pass the time of night, which it does hilariously.

As a play, it sounds not the "Alert" but the "All-Clear." It is as relaxing as a late evening among old friends when any joke is apt to win a smile which would perplex strangers. It leaves the mind as untouched as Paul did Virginia. Most of its gags are forgotten by the time the next gag has sledge-hammered the risibilities. It has no rosemary in it for remembrance.

Its sole business is to serve as the shortest distance between two hours. Its laughs are sufficient unto the moment when these moments are passing. That is the play's point, the source of its homespun pleasure, and explains why it eludes criticism.

The fact that "Dear Ruth" is the despair of critics may be the very reason that it is the delight of audiences no less than of critics while they are still members of an audience. All reviewers realize, to their sorrow, that there are certain plays, enjoyable enough in the theatre, which defy analysis in print. They are birds which refuse to have the salt of criticism put on their tails.

Some forty-two years ago, in a series of lectures delivered before the Royal Institution, A. B. Walkley, who spoke with authority as well as grace on dramatic criticism, touched upon this very weakness in the profession he adorned. Said he:

> The plain truth is that the playgoer who is merely seeking his pleasure and the playgoer who has to appraise and justify his pleasure of necessity take somewhat different views. For the one there is the sole question, Am I pleased? For the other there is that question too, but coupled with another question—a question which, by the way, was one of Matthew Arnold's many borrowings from Sainte-Beuve—Am I right to be pleased?

Walkley's contention was that the critics have to say why they are pleased or bored, and he knew that in itself could be a bore. Walkley realized that there are plays which, though they rightly please the public, often make bad "copy." They present the critic with what Walkley called "unworkable material." Plays, interesting enough in themselves, if they offer no variation in type, are apt to vex the critic because they provide him with no "purchase."

Bartlett Robinson, Virginia Gilmore, and John Dall in "Dear Ruth."

As specific instances of plays which "always come out worse on paper than on the boards," Walkley mentioned melodramas and farces. The critic, according to him, is generally tempted to describe melodrama by the ironic method, which is "perfidy," and to narrate the plot of a farce. At its best, to narrate the plot of a farce is, in Walkley's accurate phrase, "to decant champagne."

His reason was that criticism, being a form of literature, can do justice to the literary elements in drama. Hence, as he saw it, "the drama of ideas" is apt to be overpraised in print, because print is a good medium for ideas. But in drama, as Walkley sagely realized,

DEAR RUTH, a comedy by Norman Krasna. Directed by Moss Hart. Presented by Joseph M. Hyman and Bernard Hart at Henry Miller's Theatre, with a cast including Virginia Gilmore, John Dall, Phyllis Povah, Howard Smith, and Lenore Lonergan.

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there are many other elements. With these criticism is often at fault, because of a purely technical difficulty, "the difficulty of transposing the effects of one art into the effects of another."

That "Dear Ruth" is as innocent of art as it is of ideas makes it the harder to do justice to it in print. To point out that it tells how a young flier is tricked into proposing to an engaged girl he has never seen, because of the letters written to him overseas in this girl's name by her younger sister, is to decant no champagne. But it is to water some perfectly good beer for which playgoers have a legitimate thirst.

"Dear Ruth" may be no thing of beauty, but it is a joy—while it lasts. Its relation to esthetics may be as remote as a mule's to Pegasus. It may cross the comic strips with a valentine that has slipped on a banana peel.

The stodgy banker it offers as a rival of the dashing flier may represent one of the most withering attacks to have been launched on the money marts since the New Deal came into power. Both as written and as played by Lenore Lonergan, the letter-writing younger sister may be a study in adolescence nearer to Little Lulu than to Wedekind. But "Dear Ruth" IS funny. Very funny. Which should be ample reason for gratitude.

Its family feeling is warm, even if the members of its nice family all appear to have been brought up in a stock company. In his characterization of the father Howard Smith genially realizes those hearthside qualities of the average older American which the theatre usually overlooks. Virginia Gilmore plays Ruth with an honesty and charm which never seem alien amidst the corn in which she stands.

As the aviator John Dall proves himself to be an exceptionally ingratiating young actor. He has that "overseas look in his eyes." He makes it clear that the armed services of this country feed on red meat. In doing so, he succeeds where many young actors might fail. He has no trouble either in convincing audiences that he is a male or in persuading them that he is a flier freshly returned from active duty.

Although most playgoers may be thankful to "Dear Ruth" for the relaxed, non-critical laughter it abundantly supplies, those who are theatre-minded will find in it another source of pleasure. This comes from watching how expertly both Mr. Krasna and Mr. Hart drain the script of its unsuspected no less than its obvious laughs. They squeeze the orange dry. And though it is not exactly Sunkist, it proves far juicier than any criticism can hope to suggest.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

A Barkless White Dog

DINGO: THE STORY OF AN OUTLAW. By Henry G. Lamond. New York: William Morrow Co. 1945. 206 *pp.* $2.50.

Revieved by PHIL STONG

MR. LAMOND showed in "Kilgour's Mare" that he was a master of the Queensland ranching scene, from its largest proprietor to its kangaroo hunters, 'roos themselves, dingoes, lizards, rock pythons and their table manners, the spontaneous bursting of vegetable and animal life from an apparent desert, after the first showers following the hot dry winter—it is a finished picture.

The book needs a short glossary—this dull-witted reviever did not realize that "'roo" referred to kangaroo for three or four pages; it might mean that famous product of the seas, the buckaroo, or the even more famous product of Hollywood, the stinkaroo. "Goanna" is nowhere defined though it was a substantial part of the hero's diet; all of three minutes was required to learn that it is a lizard of the Monitor family, the Monitors being so named because they are supposed to warn of the approach of crocodiles.

There isn't much to the story and the book needs very little story. "White Ears" is a dingo, one of those barkless wild dogs which look something like a tougher kind of coyote, with a grudge against mankind. After being poisoned by strychnine and watching some acquaintances struggle in traps, he knows the taste of the poison and the smell of steel and man. Thereafter he goes about sheep killing in a wholesale manner, partly for revenge, partly for food, and partly for amusement. When he encounters a trap or a poisoned carcass he signals his revenge in the only way possible for a dog. Mr. Lamond thinks the gesture was purely derisive; it seems possible that the animal was merely putting out a red lantern.

The champion dingo's depredations grow so large that a fabulous reward, $424, is put up for him and the services of the champion dogman enlisted. Time after time White Ears outwits his enemy till he is finally caught in what he has always dreaded—a fence.

The dogman, having a fitting substitute for the reward, lets him go.

This reviewer owns a few sheep and would have shot him if he had been Joe Louis or Sonja Henie.

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COWARD-McCANN

Biography of a Multifaced Man

COPERNICUS AND HIS WORLD. By Herman Kesten. New York: Roy Publishers. 1945. 408 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by WALDEMAR KAEMPFFERT

NIKOLAJ KOPERNIK, better known by his Latinized name of Nicolaus Copernicus, was not only an astronomer who upset the thinking of the Western world on the place of the earth and the planets in the solar system but a churchman, a physician, a painter, a poet, an economist, a statesman, and a soldier. Centuries before him a few Greek philosophers had decided that the earth revolves around the sun. Nevertheless, the Ptolemaic geocentric system prevailed for centuries. That system was good enough for most practical purposes before the circumnavigators undertook their voyages. In fact it was

Herman Kesten has written a deservedly good biography.

so good that Copernicus retained some of its features. Hence his system was not flawless either in theory or logic. After the example of the ancients he assumed the uniform circular motion of the planets. Since the only observed motions are incessantly varying he had to postulate a different center for each of the orbits. The sun was placed within the orbit of each of the planets, but not in the center of any of them. In other words, Copernicus still adhered to Ptolemy's system of epicycles. Consequently the sun performed no other office than that of distributing light and heat. The "fixed" stars were alleged to be stationary.

For all these reasons it is far from the truth to state that Copernicus gave us our modern system of astronomy. Nevertheless, his conception of the earth's relation to the sun was revolutionary. Only a bold man could muster the courage to break with ecclesiastical tradition. Copernicus is said to have received the first copy of his "De Revolutionibus" on his deathbed. Had he lived he would probably not have suffered the displeasure of the church, for Rome paid little attention to him or his theories until Galileo entered the scene. In fact Copernicus's classic was dedicated to Paul III.

In the time of Copernicus the seeds of liberalism had already been sown; for it was the time of the Renaissance. Moreover Poland, one of the more important kingdoms of Europe, was a powder barrel which had exploded under German oppression. As a cleric who had traveled much Copernicus must have been peculiarly sensitive to the influences of his period. His happened to be a very analytic and objective mind. Much of his resistance to Teutonic onslaughter can probably be attributed to his class ideology; for he was a landowner, a district administrator, an assessor, and a collector of ground rents, an ambassador, a judge, and a philosopher.

No great man can be separated from his time. Accordingly, the author of this book gives us a lively picture of the period in which Copernicus lived.

Even if Copernicus had not distinguished himself by promulgating his conception of the universe he would have to be mentioned in any history of Poland. As a soldier he was one of a long line of Polish patriots who fought for home and what then passed for country. Economists cannot ignore him because, long before Elizabeth's Gresham, he formulated the law that bad money always drives good money out of circulation. A personality so multifaced deserves a good biography, and Kesten has written it. There is no more exciting life than that of the great Pole, and in these pages ample justice is done to it in a style that is racy and vivid. This reviewer regrets the lack of any index.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 572)

W. CAMPBELL*:
FLIGHT OF THE GULLS

Would you know the wild vastness
Of the lakes in their fastness,
  Their heaven's blue span?
Then come to this region
  From the dwellings of man;
Leave the life-care behind you,
  That nature annuls,
. . . Follow, follow
  The flight of the gulls.

*Canadian poet.

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The Lost War

THE BATTLE WITHIN. By Philip Gibbs. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1945. 234 *pp.* $2.50.

Revieved by KATHARINE SIMONDS

THROUGHOUT his long career, Sir Philip Gibbs has reiterated his passionate belief in the dignity and greatness of the common man, whatever his nationality. Where he was reluctantly obliged to admit that hideous things had been done, he blamed them on the blindness, stupidity, and weakness of a few personal devils. All through the years between the wars, he repeated his conviction that the ordinary German was as decent as the ordinary Englishman. Now, since this war began, he has been forced to feel that individual Germans must be blamed for what they have done, even though it was done under direction. He has lost the fire of his old faith, but he has no pleasure in this new attitude: though his mind has been compelled to abandon his familiar crusade, his heart has found no new spiritual home: he is sad and weary.

In this novel—and not for the first time—he has represented this struggle of his own in terms of two people, British and German—who love each other. When war came, and German Karl went home to fight, he and English Pearl promised that after the war their love would be unchanged. But when Karl did return, assuring Pearl that he dissociated himself from Nazi barbarism and that as a member of the Luftwaffe he had maintained some knightly ideals, she felt that the "rivers of blood" between them could never be bridged, and she chose to marry an American instead. That her decision was intellectual rather than emotional is demonstrated by the alternately slavish and cocksure character of Edward,—who deserves a place only in the odd waxworks gallery of Americans in British fiction.

But though the scenes and characters in the shadow play which he has imagined are not very impressive, the real battle, the battle within Sir Philip, is very moving indeed. That so much good will, so much hope, so much faith, should end in defeat and discouragement is tragic; but that a man who needs the security of a crusade will not substitute for it a bandwagon demonstrates honesty almost great enough to outweigh the tragedy.

Correction

In the issue of March 10, the name Walker Allen Read appeared as the author of "The Word Harvest of '44." The correct sequence of the author's name should have been Allen Walker Read. We apologize for the error.

WE NOTE *the strange apathy on the part of the nation's distinguished literary critics, concerning a book which marks a definite milestone in the career of its perpetrator. Oh, they have "noticed" it (as one would notice a mosquito when one is wrestling with a shark). But a certain warmth is lacking. Their testimonials have been tempered with tolerance, enfeebled with condescension . . . or, in extreme cases, written with invisible ink on paper that wasn't there.*

The catalogue of faint (if any) praise is impressive. Where were the Edmund Wilsons . . . the Lewis Mumfords . . . and the three Johns: Chamberlain, Erskine and Mason Brown . . . when the richest fruit of that tree which grows in the brain of H. Allen Smith fell into the lap of a waiting world?

Where, indeed? Very well, then. Neither we, nor our Mr. Smith shall crawl. Instead – dipping our pens in that tepid fluid of restraint which nourishes the anemic accolade and the congealed compliment, we say with simple dignity: While the cranium-critics tell you what to do with Japan, Germany, Salvador Dali and ulcers, here is What To Do With H. Allen Smith – read his newest book.

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(Continued from page 7)

selves readily to his habitual interpretation on the basis of the familiar—the belief, say, in "the evil eye"—is one of ethnocentric depreciation. They exhibit a strangeness, especially in the case of mores which are "primitive" in the eyes of those who have reached a higher culture-level, that makes them seem repellent or ridiculous. They are forthwith labelled as "superstitious," an attribute never other than derogatory. It is seldom realized by those who employ it that they are fouling their own ancestral nests; for they have long forgotten the base evolutionary stages from which they have ascended to their present level of cultural complacency.

That term, "superstition," needs inspection. It is a kind of derogatory label for the unrecognized survival. The Roman sense of *superstitio* was religious: an excessively credulous awe before the supernatural. The superstitious were those who "stand above," or out-do, the proper (*i. e.*, Roman) idea or practice. Their "ideology" is defective. But there is another and later etymology, not reflecting Roman ideas, whereby the *super* is taken in the sense of its shortened form, *sur,* as in *survive,* that is, *outlive* or *live on* beyond some point of time adjudged to be a natural or proper limit. In that sense, a superstition is a survival. In last analysis, then, the Roman *superstitio* is a survival. So is practically every superstition, the derogatory sense of the term being merely ethnocentric. It has taken science to reveal that survivalistic ideas and practices have been natural, indeed inevitable, adjustments in their setting and, as such, not contemptible at all, but of high value as evidence to the student of societal evolution—a value that is wholly below the horizon of the rationalizer.

Ethnocentric intolerance attaches to cultural differences pronounced enough to appear repellently strange. There is little intolerance between peoples on a low level of culture, little especially in the matter of religion or magic; for since all such beliefs and practices are pretty much alike, there are no set creeds to fight about. The same is true of primitive governmental and marital mores. It is when there come into contact two peoples, one or each of whom thinks it "knows better"—much better—than the other, that intolerance sets in and flourishes. It is observable also that a younger and, in its own conceit, wiser generation regularly shows an intolerance, perhaps only indulgent and patronizing, of what is "old." The epigenes have a centrism, too.

What is not over-strange, and so not utterly to be rejected, seems to call for interpretation in familiar terms that lend it rationality. Hence rationalization.

But, no matter how alien in origin, any novelty that can be subjected to immediate and objective test is relatively immune to ethnocentric hostility, and offers slight challenge to rationalization. This is the case with a novel weapon, tool, or simple process. It is true that there exist, even among very backward peoples, taboos of a religious or magical order that forbid any test whatsoever, so that anything and everything of foreign origin may be removed from examination; but what is *prima facie* useful has been repeatedly smuggled in over all such customs-walls.

Rationalization, however, though it suspends a kind of veil before the survival-recognizing eye, really makes for toleration of that which, but for that veil, might be viewed with hostility, contempt, or ridicule. It makes thus

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for acculturation, for it causes the strange to appear familiar, whether the strange be really of alien provenance or dating so far back in the domestic past as to seem outlandish.

Mixed cases abound: for instance, while the attempt to resurrect the stone axe would be considered lunatic, no one has any objection to the retention of the shape of that axe in its steel successor, for that shape is not recognized as survivalistic. Non-recognition relieves men of any effort to rationalize. Many a survival is identifiable only through etymology: for instance, that the sceptre was, in origin, a mere staff. Etymology reveals that such a symbol is survivalistic; but word-derivation is Greek to the non-specialist, and no one is likely to become agitated by its revelations. Word-fossils throw considerable light upon the racial past; but, except to the specialist, they are of curious rather than practical interest. They lead, however, to numbers of instances of reckless rationalization.

It is evident enough that it takes some education to produce a rationalizer, to say nothing of a scientific investigator; for both must have some intellectual curiosity and an intelligence that can be challenged to account for what is novel. Neither is satisfied forthwith to dismiss what he does not understand as "mere superstition." But, while both must have observed and have felt the urge to explain, that is about as far as general education goes in the direction of scientific investigation. It advances a goodly distance farther in promoting rationalization.

The poorly informed and unreflective take things as they come, either not recognizing in them any challenge to account for them, or dismissing as folly or superstition what is strange enough to compel attention, or adopting uncritically plausible rationalizations on what they conceive to be the authority of those, the better educated, who are supposed to know. But education has regularly taught, not science, but wishful thinking and agreeable rationalization. It has sharpened wits, indeed, but that honing has been through exercises in logic and dialectics calculated to "prove" preselected dogmas, largely religious or political. It might be said of the educationally privileged that, though they rationalize primarily for themselves, they rationalize even more effectively for the less privileged who blindly trust them.

The scientifically-minded are, as a group, alone in resisting the temptation to use the mind as an instrumentality for supplying "good reasons," as distinguished from "real reasons," for thinking and doing what they want to, as the spirit moves. The scientifically-minded recognize no such "will to believe." But they are, as yet, few. It is freedom of investigation, resulting in the acquisition of "historic sense," that undoes rationalization. Dogma of any kind favors it, for the dogmatist, knowing that he possesses the whole truth, is under no stress to criticize or amend, but can readily twist anything and everything into terms of his inspirational assumption, which is his authoritarian major premise. From it he can deduce whatever has been put into it.

The grossest survivals persist among the most benighted. At the other end of the scale, survivals are more likely to be viewed as anomalies, to be whitewashed in one way or another, as Jahweh's jealousy and ferocity, or the legend of Creation, has been interpreted to mean something more agreeable to taste than what the record actually says. Between these two extremes of the ignorant and the "knowing" lies a welter of more or less enlightened means: the "masses" who accept, more or less, what they are told. Of late, however, the less privileged have learned from contact with scientific products and processes—not theories—a certain realism that has weakened their credulity and their docility in acceptance of what they are told. They are, as the optimistic but vague phrase goes, "beginning to think for themselves." That generally means to harbor thoughts of which the wish is father. In any case, however, they cannot be herded along by a crook (material or human) as sheepishly as they have been hitherto.

Considering that geological fossils have been of high significance in the

Fraser Young's Literary Crypt: No. 91

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer to No. 91 will be found in the next issue.

CPK JFAABDGCKH LAFE FW

CPK JGEEKALKI DNFTI TLCP

CPK MKGANR NBJKEJK FW

MNGCLEBU FA FNH MKTCKA.

—ICKLESKJO—JGEEKAR AFT.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 90

TO AN ECHO YOU OWE THE PLEASURE OF HEARING YOURSELF TALK.

—WAY OF THE WORLD.
—CONGREVE

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MIDWEST BOOK NEWS

The Suburban Book Store

by Howard R. Cannon, owner
Cannon's Book Store
Oak Park, Illinois
Guest Columnist

Our experience in a Chicago suburb eight miles west of Morley's "Old Loopy" has suggested over and over that the retail book dealer's usefulness consists in bringing a wide selection of good books close to the homes of the people. We have found that it is unnecessary for a suburban book store to be a headquarters for bric-a-brac and miscellaneous pottery. In fact, a constant endeavor to be an authoritative center only for books gives our public confidence in our suggestions.

In six years of suburban bookselling, there has been no indication that our store has taken trade away from other stores, either in the suburb or in the city. Rather, it has discovered new readers; it has made book-lovers of people who had not been book purchasers; and it has increased by thousands the great circle of people who get their chief delight from reading.

Also, our staff knows its clients so well that it can make suggestions to fit individual needs. We have often been told that this personalized service filled a need in a book-hungry community.

Some things have surprised and pleased us. Among them is the urgent desire of parents to put the best before their children. We constantly try to make our community feel that good books for children are an investment in character.

Likewise, intelligent recommendations for adults are an investment in informed citizenship. It is an exciting adventure to earn a living by thus being instrumental in moulding the minds of boys and girls . . . and adults . . . who are our own neighbors. *BOOK WEEK has recognized* our efforts and helps us every week to achieve the desired result.

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reconstruction of the evolutionary series within the organic range, it would be a curious, interesting, and perhaps revealing inquiry to investigate what a comprehensive collection of social survivals might reveal as to the social-evolutionary series: to attempt something in the line of a social palæontology.

A certain preliminary sampling of such a study might be undertaken by collecting word-fossils, to see what kind of a culture-history might be constructed on the limited evidence of these linguistic survivals. Such a scouting enterprise would be favored by the fact that the etymological evidence is nearly all in one place: in the modern dictionary, edited by, or with the close collaboration of, sound philologists. And any such partial survey should not only reveal a good deal about the terrain of the survival-range but, if the foray has been thoroughly and discreetly performed, should constitute also an actual occupation of a part of the whole survival-territory which it is proposed to invade. It would form a "bulge," later to be consolidated with other local inroads.

A. G. Keller is Professor Emeritus, Science of Society, Yale University.

BYPATHS OF FRUSTRATED PACIFISM

(*Continued from page* 11)

tical parties or, as in a war, elect to become party-less. We just aren't that individualistic. It seems to me that the passionate, ill-assorted, disjointed individualists of Mr. Comfort's rewarding, though demanding, novel often, in fact, almost always, approach the paranoiac. If he admitted this fact, his novel would be a more palatable dish. When he allows his odd people to behave in a thoroughly outlandish fashion, with no marginal apologies, the book comes alive. When he tries to relate their outlandish behavior to politics and philosophy, this old brain rocks.

When Mr. Comfort decides to abandon his descriptive mannerisms and ideological clichés and gets interested in rounding out one or two characters, he'll probably prove himself to be one of the finest novelists of tomorrow. Or perhaps he'll just be contented to be a very fine doctor. Or perhaps he'll do both. At any rate there are no signs that he'll be another Dr. Cronin. But if he's not careful, he might be another Dr. Maugham. That might satisfy me and thousands of his potential readers—but I'm perfectly sure it wouldn't satisfy young Mr. Comfort!

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A Library of Mexicana

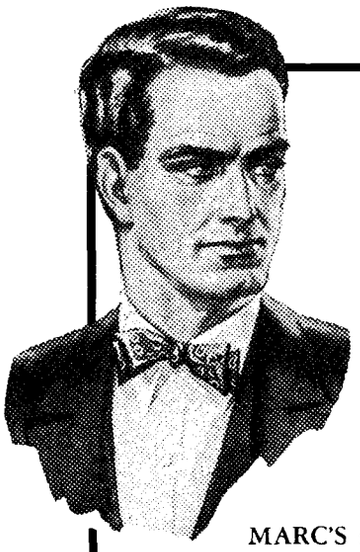
ANTOLOGIA DE LA LITERATURA MEXICANA. Introducción, selecciones y crítica de Carlos Castillo. Con un apéndice bibliográfico de Luis Leal. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1944. 424 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by DUDLEY FITTS

ANY good anthology—and this is a very good one indeed—is an invitation, a provocation. Excited by some passage, which in a book of this scope must necessarily be all too brief, the reader should want to turn to the original work and pursue his investigations at length. In my own case I was led by this book to the "Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez," by the seventeenth century savant Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, and am consequently indebted to Dr. Castillo for as ingratiating a tale of piracy and romantic misadventure as anyone could wish for. Thanks to Señor Leal's bibliography and to the generous industry of the Mexico City publishing houses in issuing attractively and cheaply the literary treasures of the Mexican past, the reader with enough Spanish to get around with should have no difficulty in consulting any of the major works represented in this collection.

The anthology covers Mexican literature from the time of the *Conquistadores* and their historiographers—Hernán Cortés is represented by an extract from one of his reports to Charles V, and there are passages from Las Casas, Toribio de Motolinia, Díaz del Castillo, López de Gómara, among others—down roughly to the first decade of the present century. The classic drama is represented by a goodly bit (the entire first act and a condensation of the second and third) of Ruiz de Alarcón's still enjoyable comedy *"El examen de maridos."* The great Spanish poetry of the Golden Age is reflected in the selection—how inadequate a selection!—from Sor Juana, scholar, nun, Góngorist poet, the first American feminist. One is almost tempted to say the last great poetry; for the two centuries following the death of Sor Juana were a sterile period characterized by a maximum of metrical writing and a minimum of true poetry, and it was not until the Modernist movement of the eighties and nineties that the real thing began to happen again. Unfortunately, Dr. Castillo's book ends precisely there, although he promises another volume devoted to the writers of today—a volume which should be as exciting as it will be desperately difficult to compile. Even so, three living authors are represented: Enrique Gonzáles Martínez, who, even more than Dario, is responsible for the tenor of the best Latin-American poetry today; José Vasconcelos; and that notable poet, who is also the greatest of American humanists, Alfonso Reyes.

"Spain gave herself body and soul to the New World," writes Dr. Castillo. And Mexico was her favorite child: *Nueva Espana,* the New Spain. The Spanish tradition has never been lost; but how richly it has been assimilated with the native American genius is everywhere apparent in these pages. Even in Bernal Díaz there is a new breath, something that is not from Europe. And as time passes, the failures are those who write for Madrid and Paris, though even a poor Franceward-looking novel like Federico Gamboa's "Santa" [1903] has a kind of native life that saves it from being completely *Yellow-Book fin de siècle.* The great successes are Fernández de Lizardi, whose "Periquillo Sarniento" has recently enjoyed a triumph in English translation; Vicente Riva Palacio, if for no other reason than his genial fables in "Cuentos del General"; Rafael Delgado, Amado Nervo, Ramón López Velarde, novelists, essayists, poets, all of them conscious of the heritage of the past, but in love with and celebrating the America of their present. And now, in our own time, the wheel is at full circle. The enlightened and humane policy of the Mexican government has attracted the refugee and expatriate artists of Spain and other countries in such numbers that Mexico may justly call itself *Nueva Espana* again, or even *Nueva Europa.* Nowhere in the hemisphere is there a more vital and influential literary and artistic activity than in Mexico City. Its literary reviews—*Cuadernos Americanos,* for instance, and the extraordinary valuable *El Hijo Pródigo*—yield in nothing to the best that any country can show. The books that have been pouring from its presses during the last four or five years are brilliant proof of the validity of a concept of publishing whose basis is cultural, not commercial. But in no way is Mexico doing more useful service to the American cause than in the rediscovery and inexpensive publication of the great books of its past, and Dr. Castillo's "Antologia" is a welcome guide to the best of these.



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the Phoenix Nest

THOSE who are familiars of the weird and fantastic in literature have no doubt followed the publications of Arkham House in Sauk City, Wisconsin, run by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei, and know also that strange book "The Outsider and Others," by the late Howard P. Lovecraft; the horror stories of a modern Poe. This volume was collected back in 1939. Lovecraft died in 1937. "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" was the second Lovecraft omnibus, and one or two volumes of selected letters of the Providence genius-in-his-own-field are contemplated. Now comes a smaller book, "Marginalia," a most interesting miscellany designed as a stop-gap for those readers whose thirst for Lovecraft's brand of horror is not easily quenched. It contains an example of his ghost-writing for Harry Houdini, several of his revisions of work by other hands, his essays on the writing of weird fiction and cognate matters, several examples of his juvenilia, some fragments, and a number of appreciations of him both in prose and verse.

To the former, in prose, the Providence poet, Winfield Townley Scott (a new volume of whose poems, by the way, is about to be published by T. Y. Crowell), and Thomas Olive Mabbott, the Poe expert, both contribute. There are many valuable illustrations to the book, showing Lovecraft and his various friends and disciples, his home, his study, some drawings by him, and so on. He abhorred fish, both to see and eat; hated the ocean as their abode; could consume fabulous quantities of ice-cream of all flavors; loved cats; and would never allow himself to get sunburned, cultivating a pallor of countenance set off by dark clothes. He stayed up all night and slept all day, and was during his youth completely under the domestic sway of his mother. Vincent Starrett has called him "his own most fantastic creation," but his tales have a singularly weird quality. In a sense he remained a gifted amateur, but he did the sort of thing for which I myself have a great fancy. I hope that, later on, a new edition of his best tales, gleaned from "The Outsider," "Beyond the Wall," etc., will be given presentation in larger type than they can at present claim, with illustrations perhaps by Virgil Finlay who has done such phenomenal work for *Famous Fantastic Mysteries,* a periodical to which I am now addicted.

In their March, 1944 number, as well as reprinting Chesterton's "The Man Who Was Thursday," *F.F.M.* did the same by "The Ghost Pirates" of William Hope Hodgson (1875-1918); and I have now received a mimeographed publication called *The Reader and Collector,* which is issued occasionally by H. C. Koenig, 2 East End Avenue, this city, the June (last) number being dedicated especially to Hodgson, and containing appreciations of him by Koenig himself, Lovecraft (exempted from his long "Supernatural Horror in Literature" in "The Outsider"), Clark Ashton Smith (whose work I first knew as poet on the Pacific Coast when he was hailed by the late George Sterling, and whose latest weird tales from Arkham House are "Out of Space and Time" and "Lost Worlds"), August Derleth, Ellery Queen, and so on. Years ago I remember delighting in the stories in "Carnacki, the Ghost Finder," recommended to me by Elinor Wylie, though I see that Howard P. Lovecraft rates this book below Hodgson's others. "The Night Land" was Hodgson's longest story and, says Koenig, "one of the longest fantastic romances ever written, running close to six hundred pages. It is a story of the world in the future when the sun has died and the 'Last Millions' are living in a large redoubt, a huge pyramid of gray metal nearly eight miles high and five miles around the base." I like the gentle title of one of his chapters, "The Swine Things."

I HAVE received a photostat of an article in the English *News Review* called "In the Footsteps of Benjamin Pollock." The date is February 8, 1945. Pollock was the great original to build toy theatres and print and sell

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THE BIRTHDAY MURDER *Lange Lewis* (Bobbs-Merrill: $2.)	Hollywood director poisoned on eve of novelist-wife's birthday. Detective "The Moose" Tuck investigates.	Good character work, excellent characterization, canny sleuthing—and a solution that may or may not be cricket.	O.K.
STREAM SINISTER *Kathleen Moore Knight* (Crime Club: $2.)	Mexican hacienda scene of deaths and supernatural visitations largely cleared up by visiting U. S. army officer.	Lieut. Gavin Scott saves last of old family from hideous death and scotches assorted villains effectively.	Entertaining
THE OUTSIDERS *A. E. Martin* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	Murders in group of antipodean side-show freaks solved by detective Linley.	Sleuth and entrepreneur wind up "funny case." Queer characters and ample action.	Exotic

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cut-out sheets of characters, to Robert Louis Stevenson and others, at 73 Hoxton Street, North London. "It is more than seven years," says the article, "since Benjamin Pollock looked for the last time on a play-print fresh from his weary presses, and until last summer his only surviving daughter, Louisa, carried on the business which he had taken over from his father-in-law, J. Reddington, in 1877, after it had been established forty years."

But here's the great news now, so hold onto your hats, boys!

> It looked as if the Pollock Legend was ended, but in stepped plump, genial, enterprising Allan Keene, bookseller and antiquarian, accompanied by four friends: Douglas Millard, a publisher; Fred Bartlett, a banker; and those great figures of the British stage, Robert Donat and Ralph Richardson. They formed a company, Benjamin Pollock, Ltd.—to take over the Hoxton shop and all its stock, to continue the Pollock tradition and to bring the charm of the toy theatre before a generation that knows nothing of it.

They are going to make the Hoxton shop a Pollock shrine, also have stocks for sale, and put into production a modern type of folding stage to carry the oldtime Pollock proscenium, but with flash-lamp bulbs instead of cotton wicks. They are also going to produce a modern series of plays along with the old nineteenth century favorites. "From the West End and the provinces we propose to expand to the Dominions and Colonies, and the United States." Goethe, Dickens, Ellen Terry, Millais, G. K. Chesterton, and Diaghileff were all contemporary devotees of the toy theatre—the Sitwells also. "Allan Keene, leader of its renascence, served in the last war, became a political cartoonist at 19 on the *Manchester Daily Express*, went into advertising, was 'bitten by the book bug' in 1920, and still shows no sign of recovery."

I am certainly most grateful to whoever at the New York Public Library sent me that photostat!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. "Zenobia's Infidelity." Elephant. 2. "Rab and His Friends." Dog. 3. "The Haunted Bookshop." Dog. 4. "Captain January." Cow. 5. "Bob Son of Battle." Dog. 6. "Lorna Doone." Horse. 7. "Salar the Salmon." Salmon. 8. "My Friend Flicka." Horse. 9. "Biography of a Grizzly." Bear. 10. "The Yearling." Deer. 11. "Florian." Horse. 12. "Treasure Island." Parrot. 13. "Moby Dick." Whale. 14. "Peter Pan." Dog. 15. "Barnaby Rudge." Bird. 16. "Silas Marner." Horse. 17. "David Copperfield." Dog. 18. "Ferdinand." Bull. 19. "Don Quixote." Horse. 20. "Black Beauty." Horse.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a special and intelligent clientèle; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, traveling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature, expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purpose and character of The Saturday Review. Ads of a strictly personal nature are limited to an exchange of correspondence, thus also enabling an exchange of reference. Rates: 10 cents per word including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. We forward all mail received in answer to box numbers. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y.

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IDEALIST would welcome signed letter from anonymous correspondent to his "statement of faith" of Jan. 13. Box 649-K.

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(Continued on next page)

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PERSONALS

(*Continued from page* 33)

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The Crostics Club

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

WHEN Norman Cousins instituted this column as an exchange for the DC letters formally relegated to our files, he planned better than he knew. As a sort of Clearance Bureau it furnishes me, at any rate, with continuous entertainment. Let me tell you:

George Boissard, old-timer from Madison, Wis., whose life interests and activities encompass the world, had a "thrill" when he read of recent vintage in this column about Mrs. Robinson Locke; for, wrote he, "her late husband did more for me than almost any other man of my acquaintance back when I worked on the *Toledo Blade* in 1893-4." He reminisces about other sons of Patroleum Naseby whom he knew. When I sent his letter to Mrs. Locke she replied with pages of statistics to set his memory straight and bring him up-to-date, and I sent that on to him.

Also: When Mrs. Bessie Baker, Wayland, Mich., in writing of her dyed-in-the wool background, added that Columbia, Harvard, and the home of her brother-in-law, Ray Stannard Baker at Amherst, Mass., were her summer playgrounds, I reflected: "How is she connected as a Baker with the young Navy lieutenant who surprised me with a call this evening, son of a dear friend and classmate of Marblehead, Mass., awaiting his assignment here? So I recounted my case to her to receive at once three pretty snapshots of the wedding of said Luther Gulick to Helen Sutton in 1936 in the sunken gardens of the Amherst Bakers whither Mrs. Bessie Baker had come as a guest, where she had also met my friend with full notes on how the wedding happened to take place there!

And: You recall the jolly letters I quoted from Mrs. Dorothy Gray in Minnesota in which she told of the dire influence of the introduction of DCs on the family life of her neighboring friend; and the later joy of Mrs. Gray on discovering her acquaintance with "ankh" in one of our *SRL* DC's. Mrs. Gray has sent me a letter from her friend, Peggy Dawkins, which, though personal, so neatly illustrates my point, that I must share part of it with you: "What Father and I want to know before another day goes by is why you haven't showed us the ankh? We were toying with the idea of writing a note to E. S. K. with some illogical ideas of what happened to Annie Guiou and decided that you would know who had written it, so, like a good many other ideas, we shelved it. Anyhow I shall add that I am very cross that the only news I find about you must be gathered from *The Saturday Review*. . . ." (Mrs. Gray is now in Chicago.)

The notes from charter DCers are such good reading that I'm glad I asked for a list of them.

MARCH 17, 1945

DOUBLE-CROSTICS: No. 573

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

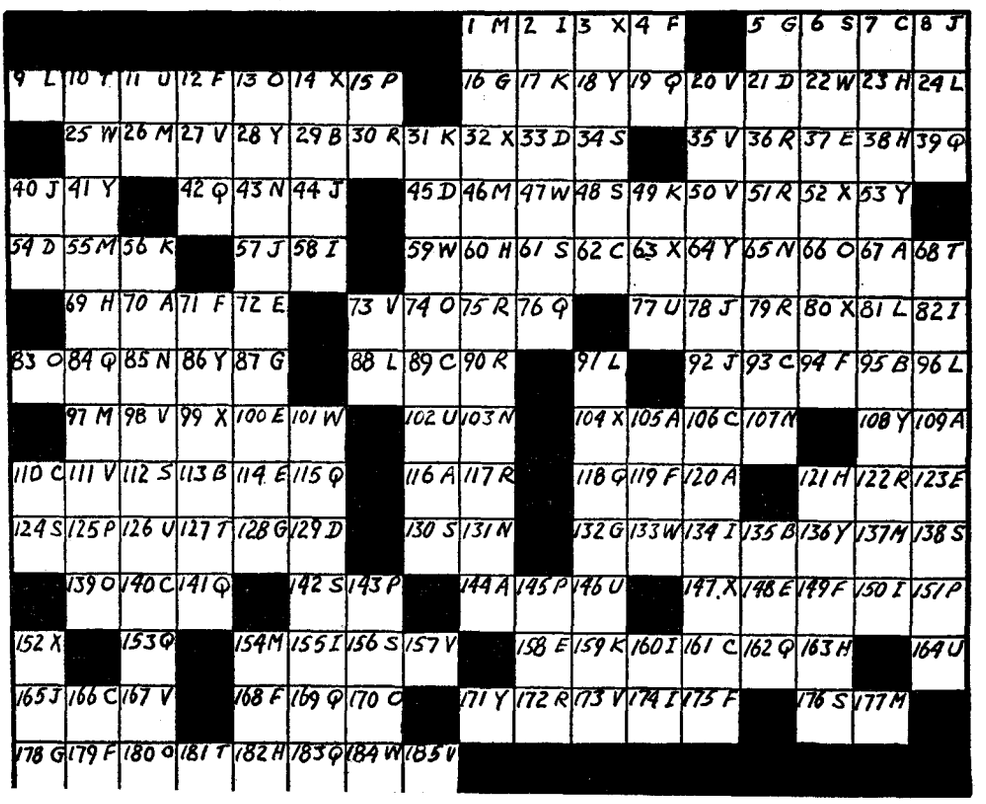
The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 26 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Small flute with three holes, used in ancient Greece.
B. Ceremonial chamber or structure, in Pueblo Indian architecture.
C. Not in order or working relations (3 wds.)
D. Ohio politician, supporter and adviser of President McKinley.
E. Canadian-born American astronomer and writer (1835-1909).
F. Member of Patagonian tribes of Tsonecan stock—great stature, low culture.
G. A dry maize product used for cereal (U. S.).
H. An agreement based on conventions or declarations.
I. Name of thirteen popes.
J. To lay a trap (3 wds.)
K. Defendant in "Trial By Jury" (G. and S. opera).
L. American geologist, and geographer (1872-; Spec. ed. for physical geography; 2nd Edition, W.N.I.)
M. Not constantly or regularly (3 wds.)
N. Rope-dancer "at the Fair" in title of poem by Robert Browning.
O. Great German Wagnerian tenor (1831-1917; Met. Opera House, 1886-8).
P. Part lioness, part hippopotamus, in judgment scenes as devourer of dead (Egypt. Myth.)
Q. Tehri is its capital (India; comp.)
R. To entangle, as insects, in a sticky substance.
S. Any incongruous mixture (Comp.)
T. Island of Dutch East Indies, west of Sumatra.
U. Scottish poet and parodist (1813-65).
V. Well-known "Air" by Grainger named for county in Ireland.
W. Progenitor of the human race (Gr. Myth.)
X. Club formed in 1714 to ridicule false tastes in learning, etc. (Pope, Swift, etc.)
Y. Vague speculation; a vagary.

WORDS

70	120	144	105	116	109	67				
135	113	29	95							
166	110	7	140	106	161	62	89	93		
45	21	54	129	33						
114	148	158	100	123	72	37				
168	4	119	179	71	12	149	175	94		
178	128	132	16	5	87					
121	60	163	38	182	69	23				
160	2	82	150	174	155	134	58			
44	8	92	78	165	57	40				
159	31	56	49	17						
91	96	88	9	81	24					
55	97	177	46	26	154	1	137			
103	85	131	65	43	107					
66	13	170	180	83	139	74				
145	15	151	125	143						
118	76	169	39	183	115	153	19	162	141	42	84
36	117	122	30	90	75	172	79	51		
176	124	34	6	48	130	138	112	142	61	156
10	127	181	68							
11	146	126	102	164	77					
35	73	167	27	98	50	157	20	173	111	185
25	133	47	101	184	59	22				
14	3	99	80	147	104	152	63	32	52	
171	41	53	86	28	18	136	108	64		



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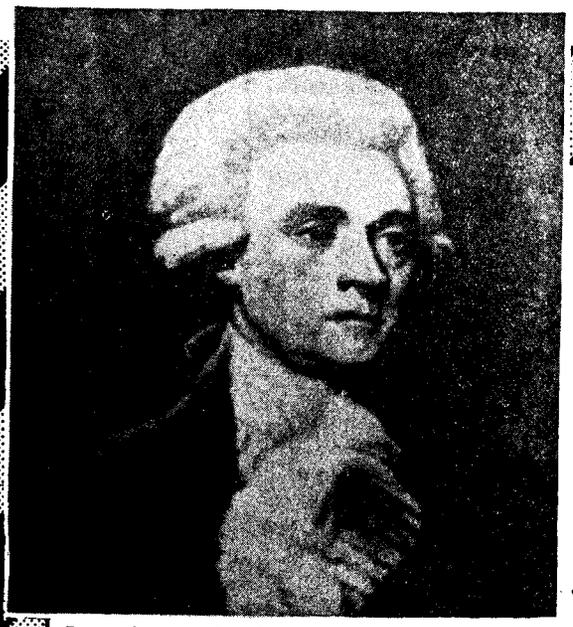

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